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THE WITNESS FOR THE DEFENCE

THE WITNESS FOR THE DEFENCE

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

By

A. E. W. MASON

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THE WITNESS FOR THE DEFENCE

CAST OF CHARACTERS

HENRY THRESK . . .	*Mr. George Alexander.*
STEPHEN BALLANTYNE . .	*Mr. Lyston Lyle.*
HAROLD HAZLEWOOD . .	*Mr. Alfred Bishop.*
RICHARD HAZLEWOOD . .	*Mr. Leslie Faber*
ROBERT PETTIFER . . .	*Mr. Sydney Valentine.*
HUBBARD	*Mr. E. Vivian Reynolds*
BARAM SINGH	*Mr. G. Trevor Roller.*
A SERVANT	*Mr. F. Arundel.*
STELLA BALLANTYNE . .	*Miss Ethel Irving.*
MRS. PETTIFER . . .	*Miss Marie Linden.*

Produced at St. James' Theatre, Wednesday, February 1, 1911 *at* 8 *p.m.*

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY

ACT I.

A Tent in Rajputana.

ACT II.

Scene 1. The Library.

Scene 2. The Same.

ACTS III & IV.

Same Scene as Act II.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR ACT I

On Scene.

Rifle against L. arm of sofa.
Letters on desk up L.
Whip on bureau L.
Cigar box on bureau L.
Matches and ash tray on bureau L.
Dispatch case.
Photograph in sealed envelope in it, locked } in bottom drawer of bureau L.
Matches and ash tray on sideboard R.
Cigarette case filled on sideboard R.
Whisky, syphon, claret, glasses (2) on sideboard R.
Bread and serviettes on table C.
Cartridges in box in drawer of sideboard R.
Stick and canvas off L.
Whistle behind back cloth.
Red signal light on at back.
All lights blacked out.

Hand Props.

Keys, Revolver } Ballantyne.
Pipe, Tobacco, Matches } Thresk.
Necklace—Stella.

THE WITNESS FOR THE DEFENCE

(Plays 26 minutes)

ACT I

SCENE.—*The interior of a large tent. Outside through the doorway is seen a plain in the moonlight. A railway crosses the plain. The signal lights of a station are visible. Beyond the plain dim hills. The doorway of the tent is at the back* R. *To the left of the doorway against the back wall a couch, against which the rook-rifle is leaning. Left of the couch* STELLA'S *writing-table with chair. Against the left wall of this tent* BALLANTYNE'S *bureau with chair. A box of cheroots and a riding crop on the top of the bureau. Below the bureau a clear space. In the centre a round table laid for dinner for three people.*

Drop curtain over entrance.

BALLANTYNE *enters from the back. He pauses on the threshold and peers round the tent. Then he comes* R. *down to the tantalus and mixes a whisky and soda. He is a little the worse for drink already and though he can walk and speak without much stumbling, he is nervous and at times he has the look of a man haunted with terror. As he stands now drinking he pauses and suddenly swings round as if he expected to be attacked. He lifts again the tumbler to his lips Over the rim of it he looks suddenly*

towards the lower entrance R. *and becomes rigid. Then sharply and in fear.*

BALLANTYNE (R. *of table* C). Who's that? (STELLA *enters* L.) Oh! It's you!

STELLA. Has the mail come? (*Comes* C., *then up* L. TO *bureau.*)

BALLANTYNE. Yes. Damn you, why can't you walk like a Christian? You go sliding stealthily about—it gets on my nerves, I tell you.

STELLA. Perhaps you would like me to carry a bell and ring it wherever I go.

BALLANTYNE. Don't be a fool! I am not asking you to do anything so ridiculous. But I won't have people creeping and creeping about me—creeping to take me unawares.

STELLA (*pointing to tumbler*). Can't you leave that alone?

BALLANTYNE. Oh, it's the drink, is it? Bosh!

(BALLANTYNE *goes to cabinet* R., *puts down glass, gets cigarette from case.*)

STELLA. You are expecting some one? (*Looking at table.*)

BALLANTYNE. A tourist doing Rajputana.

STELLA. To-night?

BALLANTYNE. Yes. He left a letter of introduction for me at the Residency in Chitipur yesterday. (*Lights cigarette, comes and sits in armchair* R. STELLA *opens and reads letters.*) It reached me half an hour ago. He had twenty-four hours, not a moment longer—the usual thing. His train reaches Jarwhal Junction in a few minutes, and as he has two hours to wait for the Bombay Mail I have sent a camel to fetch him out here to dinner. (*A whistle in the distance is heard.*) There's his train. Yes. You don't seem overjoyed, Stella, at the prospect of a visitor.

STELLA. I am not. I expect to pass an evening of humiliation.

BALLANTYNE. Oh, what do you mean ?

STELLA. It's not very pleasant to be baited before a stranger for your amusement. It's not very comfortable either for the stranger. And I don't see why after all it should amuse you so much. For it's easy to do.

BALLANTYNE. Yes, my dear. You do curl up, don't you, Stella ? Repartee isn't your strong point, is it ?

STELLA. No, I have no answers. I am driven into silence. I think, too, that if I had answers, I am rather too tired of it all to use them.

BALLANTYNE. Martyr ! (*Rises, goes up* R., *then to settee at back; sits* L. *of it.*) Well, I should have thought that you would have found anything preferable to a quiet evening alone with me. We are not what could be called a cheery, family party. I love tourists. I like to hear 'em talking. I never listened to a tourist yet but he eventually kindled in me some faint glimmer of self-respect. Tourists' talk is the one thing I know which completely fills the definition of a geometrical line. It is length without breadth. And this fellow ought to be a champion. He can just give twenty-four hours to Chitipur. So kind of him. (*Knocks over with his elbow the little rook rifle. He springs up with a cry of agitation.*) What's that ? Oh, it's your infernal popgun. Damn you, what's it doing here ? (*Picks up rifle.*)

STELLA. I mean to take it out to-morrow. I haven't used it for a year. I brought it in here to see that it was clean.

BALLANTYNE (*comes down, puts cigarette in ash tray on bureau* L. ; *comes to* L. *lower end of table* C., *examines rifle*). I hear you are quite a good shot, Stella—a regular Nimrod in petticoats. Baram Singh tells me you allow no back talk from the rabbits ; and that when you go out with this in your hand there isn't a chicken safe within a radius of twenty yards, eh ? (STELLA *goes* R., *does not answer.*) You're not

in what could be called a conversational mood, are you, my dear? It's a pity you are so clever with a rifle, isn't it, Stella? Otherwise—— (*Coming* C.)

STELLA. Well? (*Coming down* R.C.)

BALLANTYNE. Otherwise I might one day have a bit of luck, eh?

STELLA. I might shoot myself.

BALLANTYNE (*takes rifle and props it up against lower end of bureau* L.). Oh, why cross all the t's and dot the i's? (*He moves to her.*) Come here! (*She recoils. He points a shaking finger at her throat.*) What are those marks?

STELLA. Your fingers made them.

BALLANTYNE. Oh! Well, you are a damned provoking woman. Go and cover your throat.

STELLA. I won't.

BALLANTYNE. Oh, won't you? (*Seizing* STELLA'S *left wrist with his* R. *hand.*)

STELLA. No!

BALLANTYNE. If I had my way, I'd lock you up behind a Purdah like a Rajput.

STELLA. Yes, and like a Rajput kill me too.

BALLANTYNE. Fairy tales! (*Throws* STELLA'S *hand down; it comes into contact with revolver in* BALLANTYNE'S R. *pocket.*)

STELLA. What have you got there—in your pocket?

BALLANTYNE. Here? A revolver. (*Movement of fear from* STELLA. BALLANTYNE *takes revolver out of his pocket.*) You needn't be afraid. There's some one lurking about the camp.

STELLA. There's no one.

BALLANTYNE. There is. I have known it for the last two days. Some one—it may be one of our servants—some one watching for his opportunity.

STELLA. An opportunity—for what?

BALLANTYNE. Never mind; I know.

STELLA (*putting her hands on* BALLANTYNE'S *arms*). Don't carry that, Stephen. You never did before.

Lock it away! There's no need for it. There's no one watching; no one lurking!

BALLANTYNE. There is! there is! And—I am afraid. Yes. Terribly afraid.

STELLA. So am I now; terribly afraid. (*Backs slightly.*)

BALLANTYNE. Ah!

STELLA. Yes; look at my throat! You had only your hands then! Suppose that you had had that revolver in your pocket.

BALLANTYNE. Nonsense. Because I once——

STELLA. Once! (*Crosses* L. *and up to* L. *top of table* C.)

BALLANTYNE (*crosses to sideboard* R., *puts revolver on top end; come to* R. *top of table* C.). Well—you're a damned provoking woman. Even now you stand here provoking me. Go and cover those marks. I should have thought you might have found pride and spirit enough somewhere to do that without being told.

STELLA. Pride! Spirit!! (*Up to desk.*)

BALLANTYNE. Very well. I'll grant they are impossible. (*To above table* C.) I'll grant marriage with me makes them impossible. I don't care what you think. But I won't have you parading a bruised throat before the man who's coming here.

STELLA. Why so sensitive?

BALLANTYNE. He's going to write a book. He's staying twenty-four hours in Chitipur. Of course he's going to write a book. I don't mean your bruises to figure in a chapter on the Domestic Life of an Indian Official. Go and hide them! (*Up to* STELLA.)

STELLA. No.

BALLANTYNE. You shall! (*Seizing her* R. *arm.*)

(BARAM SINGH *appears at the entrance* C. *from* R. *Drops curtain, salaams.*)

BARAM (*holds curtain back*). Huzoor, Sahib Ahgya.

(BALLANTYNE *drops Stella's hand, turns.*)

(*Enter* THRESK, C. *from* R., *hat in hand.*)

THRESK. You will excuse me for not dressing. I am on my way home, and except for the few things I need for the journey I have had all my luggage directed straight to Bombay.

BALLANTYNE (*shakes hands with* THRESK. BARAM SINGH *exits* R.U.E.). Of course. That's all right. (STELLA *comes down* L.C.) This is my wife, Mr. Thresk. Stella! (THRESK *comes down* R.C.)

(STELLA *at the sound of* THRESK'S *voice starts. She covers her throat with her hand. Shakes hands with* THRESK.)

STELLA. We are in camp, you see, Mr. Thresk. (BALLANTYNE *comes down* R. *to above armchair.*) You must just take us as we are. You have not very much time. I will see that dinner is served at once.

THRESK. Oh, please, Mrs. Ballantyne. I have time enough. (STELLA *goes* R. *and off* R.L. THRESK *goes* L.)

BALLANTYNE. Besides, that's not the way. (*To* THRESK.) You'll have a cocktail? (*Calls.*) Quai hai! (*Enter* BARAM SINGH, R.U.) Cocktail. Oh, he has them. (BARAM SINGH *offers one to* THRESK, *who takes it.* THRESK *puts his hat on settee up* C. *Then brings tray to* BALLANTYNE.) No, no. I never touch them. And we'll have dinner at once. Kharna Chow. Geldi! [1]

(*Exit* BARAM SINGH, R.U.E.)

THRESK. You don't take cocktails?

BALLANTYNE. No. Cocktails are all very well for you who are here during a cold weather. But we who make our home here, we have to be careful.

THRESK. I suppose so.

[1] Kharna, etc. Bring the food. Be quick!

(*Enter* BARAM SINGH *and another Servant,* R.U.E. BARAM SINGH *puts soup plates on table to* THRESK *and* BALLANTYNE. *Servant to* STELLA. *Servants stand up at back up* R.)

BALLANTYNE. Why, dinner's actually punctual. The most astonishing thing. And here's Stella. (STELLA *enters* R.L. *She wears now a necklace.*) Let us sit down at once. (*To* STELLA.) So you have come to your senses, I see. (*To* THRESK.) Will you sit here, Mr. Thresk? You are not staying very long?

THRESK. No, I have to get back, worse luck. I am at the Bar, you see.

(BARAM SINGH *and Servant go to sideboard* R. SINGH *gets claret and whisky; servant syphon.*)

BALLANTYNE. Oh! In Parliament, too?

THRESK. Yes.

BALLANTYNE. Then you're not necessarily in search of local colour?

THRESK. I am not writing a book.

BALLANTYNE. Not writing a book! God bless my soul! Do you hear that, Stella?

THRESK. "Six weeks from door to door, or how I made an ass of myself in India." (SINGH *pours claret out for* STELLA, *then comes above* THRESK.) No, thank you.

BALLANTYNE. Aren't you setting rather a dangerous precedent?

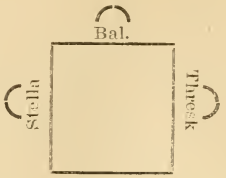
THRESK. Yes, but it won't be followed.

BALLANTYNE. By the way, what will you drink? Our cellar is rather limited in camp. There's some claret, and some whisky and soda.

THRESK. Whisky and soda for me, please.

BALLANTYNE. And for me, too. (SINGH *pours out whisky for* THRESK; *servant syphon.* SINGH *pours out whisky for* BALLANTYNE; *servant syphon. To* BARAM SINGH.) But very little whisky, mind.

What will you take, Stella? Oh, I see you have some claret. There is too much whisky here for me.



STELLA. So you are going straight from Jarwhal Junction to Bombay, and at Bombay you are going straight on board.

THRESK. Yes. Have you been home lately?

STELLA. Not for six years.

THRESK. Not since your marriage, then?

BALLANTYNE. How did you know that we had been married six years?

THRESK. Some one told me so in Bombay.

BALLANTYNE. Oh! Told you anything else?

THRESK. Yes. That you had been Resident at Bakuta in the Bombay Presidency before you came to Chitipur.

BALLANTYNE. Told you anything else?

THRESK. Why do you ask?

BALLANTYNE. Oh, it's always interesting to hear the nice—kind—damnable things one's friends say about one behind one's back. This is too strong for me.

(*Goes to tantalus, and pours whisky into his tumbler.*)

(*Servant and* BARAM SINGH *collect plates and exit servant.*)

STELLA (*to* THRESK). So you'll be in England in fifteen days. How's London?

(BALLANTYNE *returns to chair.*)

BALLANTYNE. What? Are you talking, Stella? Do let me hear what you said. I missed it.

STELLA. It wasn't of any importance.

BALLANTYNE. Oh, my dear, you do yourself an injustice. It must have been extraordinarily interesting. What was it? (*Sits.*)

STELLA. I only said, how's London?

(*Servant lays plates to* STELLA, BALLANTYNE, THRESK, *exits and returns with vegetables.*)

BALLANTYNE. Did you say that? How's London? Now why did you ask how London was? How should London be? What sort of an answer did you expect?

(SINGH *hands chicken.* STELLA, THRESK, BALLANTYNE.)

STELLA. I didn't expect any answer. Of course the question sounds stupid, if you drag it out and worry it.

BALLANTYNE. How's London? Try again, Stella!

THRESK. It does not seem to me an unnatural question for any woman to ask who has not been to London for six years.

BALLANTYNE. Really. It wouldn't occur to me, I hope, to ask it.

THRESK. I said for any woman.

(*He realizes now that* BALLANTYNE *is drunk.*)

BALLANTYNE. Oh!

THRESK. After all, say what you like, for women India means exile.

(SERVANT *hands vegetables round in same order.*)

STELLA. We need next-door neighbours.

(SINGH *exits* R.U.E.)

BALLANTYNE So that you may pull their gowns to pieces and unpick their moral characters. Never

mind, Stella. The time'll come when we shall settle down to domestic bliss at Camberley on twopence-halfpenny a year. You must look forward to that. How's London? A lot of London we'll be able to afford! God, what a life! Breakfast, lunch and dinner; dinner, breakfast, lunch—all amongst the next-door neighbours. Give me Rajputana! (*He rouses himself.*) You can stretch yourself here. I like getting away into camp—on the plain out in the jungle—alone. No one to spy on you—no one to carry tales—no next-door neighbours. How's London? (*Takes vegetables.*)

(THRESK *about to reply angrily.* STELLA *warns him not to.*)

THRESK. That's the point of view of the man who has work to do!

BALLANTYNE. What did she marry me for then? Oh, I know it doesn't suit Stella. Stella's so sociable. Stella wants parties. Stella likes frocks. Stella loves to hang herself about with beads, don't you, my dear? (*With a sudden movement* STELLA *tears the necklace from her throat, drops it on table.*) What did you do that for?

(Servant *exits* R.U.E.)

STELLA. You told me to wear them—I wore them. You jeer at me for wearing them, so I take them off.

BALLANTYNE. I'll talk to you about that afterwards.

THRESK. Why did he tell you to wear them?

STELLA. Because—— (*She breaks down, covers her face with her hands and cries.*) Oh, really, you must forgive me for making a scene, and about nothing too, absolutely nothing. I am foolish. These last days have been rather hot—specially hot—and after six years in India a woman can't be accountable for her nerves. That's my only excuse. There's

no reason. I (*Rise*) think I'll leave you for a little while. My head aches. (*As* STELLA *rises,* THRESK *rises and comes below table.*) I *can* leave you—to get along together alone. You know what women are, don't you? (*Goes* R. *a little.*) Stephen will tell you interesting things about India if you can get him to talk. I shall see you before you go. (*To* BALLANTYNE.) I'm sorry.

(STELLA *exits* R.L.E.)

BALLANTYNE. I am afraid Stella's not well. (*Pause.*) You mustn't make too much of this little scene.

THRESK. I couldn't. (*Up to his chair, sits.*)

BALLANTYNE. Why don't you say straight out that I'm a brute to my wife. That's what you're thinking.

THRESK. Well, perhaps I am—but——

BALLANTYNE. Well, I'll tell you the truth. I am not master of myself, I am afraid. (*He peers round the tent.*) They make these tents too large. One great blot of light in the middle and all round in the corners, shadows. We sit here in the blot of light—a fair mark. (*Leans forward to* THRESK.) But what's going on in the shadows, Mr. What's-your-name? Eh? Eh? What's going on in the shadows?

THRESK. I, too, would like to know that.

(SERVANT *enters with vegetables.* SINGH *enters with chicken.*)

BALLANTYNE. You are going away to-night. You can do me a service. In return I'll give you a glance into an India you don't know. (*Looks up and sees servants.*)

BALLANTYNE. We'll finish dinner first.

(SINGH *hands chicken to* THRESK.)

THRESK. Nothing more for me, thanks.

BALLANTYNE. Nor me. (*Waving servant away.*) (BALLANTYNE *goes up* R. *to* C. *opening, pulls curtain back.*) Look, there's tourist India. A plain, a railway station, and a deserted city, palaces and hovels and temples, the whole bag of tricks crumbling slowly to ruin through centuries, on the top of a hill. That's what you come out for to see in the cold weather. Jarwhal Junction and old Chitipur. (*Lets curtains drop and returns to tent above table.*) But bless your soul here's the real India.

THRESK. I see. A place very badly lit, a great blot of light in the centre and all around it dark corners and grim shadows.

BALLANTYNE. Ah, you have learnt that? Well, you shall look into the shadows. We will have the table cleared first. Hai jou! Will you smoke? (*Rises, goes* R.)

(*Enter servant with tray* R.U.E. *Enter* SINGH; *clears table, putting things on tray. Servant exits* R.U.E.; SINGH *follows with serviettes.*)

THRESK. A pipe if I may. (*Servants exeunt with dishes* R.U.E.)

BALLANTYNE. All right. A match?

THRESK. I have one.

BALLANTYNE. Now where are the keys? (BALLANTYNE *goes to bureau* L. *sits, takes key from chain in waistcoat pocket, opens lower drawer. He feels in his pocket. Lifts the despatch box from lower drawer of bureau and places it on the ground. He stoops and is about to unlock box as* BARAM SINGH *re-enters.* SINGH *has ash tray and crumb scoop and brush, brushes table-cloth, takes it off, leaving necklace and ash tray on table.*) Geldi, Geldi![1] (BARAM SINGH *goes out again,* R.U. *and lets down blind over entrance* R.U.E. BALLANTYNE *again stoops towards despatch box. His face becomes set. A look of terror comes into his face. He snatches up his riding crop and with a scream*

[1] Geldi means Be quick!

strikes at the floor between the box and the tent wall.) Did you see? Did you see?

THRESK. What? There was nothing to see.

BALLANTYNE. An arm, a hand thrust under the tent there reaching out for this case.

(THRESK *fills pipe and lights it.*)

THRESK. No.

BALLANTYNE. A lean brown arm, a hand delicate as a woman's.

THRESK. You are dreaming.

(BALLANTYNE *rises, brings box over to table, goes* R. *Picks up revolver from sideboard.*)

BALLANTYNE. Dreaming. Hold that! (*Pointing to case, he runs up to door.*) Don't leave it! Stay here! Don't even let go! Baram Singh!

(*He runs out calling for servants.* BARAM SINGH *and servant come out of upper entrance hurriedly and exeunt through the opening. The dialogue between* BALLANTYNE *and* BARAM *is spoken outside the tent.* THRESK *stands in doubt. At the side of tent, the tent wall is shaken.* THRESK *stands still.*)

BALLANTYNE (*shouts off*). Nahur koe chor aya hoga!

BARAM. Nay, Sahib, koe admi malum nay deta.

BALLANTYNE. No one? Hai beshuk hai! Scatter, search, Jakur, decko.

SERVANT. Koe budmash nay hai, Sahib.

(*Canvas beaten with a stick off* L. BALLANTYNE *re-enters. He is trembling. He closes door of tent. He utters a groan. He goes to tantalus and drinks a strong whisky plain; puts revolver down.*)

Translation—

BALLANTYNE. There's a thief about here.

BARAM. No. There's no strangers about.

BALLANTYNE. No one. There is I tell you. Jakur, decko = scatter, search.

SERVANT. There's no robber here, Sir.

BALLANTYNE. *Now* you must help me. You are going straight to England, eh? (*Coming* R. *of table.*)

THRESK. Yes.

BALLANTYNE. Good. (*He looks at the tent wall.*) It's just there the arm came through. And he has given us the slip.

THRESK. There was no arm.

BALLANTYNE. But I saw it, man! I saw it. (*Turns chair round facing audience, sits.* THRESK *brings chair* L. *of table down a little, sits.*) Come! (BALLANTYNE *opens despatch box, takes out a sealed envelope.*) Look! (*He breaks open the envelope and takes out photograph.*) You have heard of Bahadur Salak?

THRESK. The affair at Umballa, the riots at Benares, the murder in Madras!

BALLANTYNE. That's the fellow. The middle one. (*Hands photograph to* THRESK, *who takes it; points out figure.*)

THRESK. A clever face.

BALLANTYNE. He's a Mahratta Brahman from Poona. They are the fellows for brains, and Salak's the cleverest of them. The most dangerous brain in India. We have all known for years that he worked the strings of sedition. But we could never lay our hands on him.

THRESK. But he's caught now. He's in gaol waiting his trial at Calcutta.

BALLANTYNE. Yes.

THRESK. You have got him.

BALLANTYNE. Perhaps.

THRESK (*turns photograph over*). I see the photograph was *taken* at *Poona.*

BALLANTYNE. Yes, ten years ago. But he was at the same game then. You have got the proof in your hand.

THRESK. The photograph?

BALLANTYNE. Yes; there's a group of nine men. Salak and his eight friends. Well, every man jack

of the eight is now doing time for burglary. And why? Because Salak wanted money to finance his intrigues. That's how he got it.

THRESK. Then this photograph is a valuable thing to have?

BALLANTYNE. It's a mighty dangerous thing to have. It's the only one in existence. There's Salak amongst burglars. And the negative has been destroyed. So Salak's friends are naturally anxious to get it back.

THRESK. Do they know you have it?

BALLANTYNE. Of course they do. You had proof that they know, when that brown arm wriggled in under the tent like a snake. (*Rises.*) For a moment I thought it was one.

THRESK (*shrugs his shoulders*). How do you come to possess it?

BALLANTYNE. The Rajah of Bakuta gave it to me when I left his State. (*Sits.*) He came down to the station to see me off. He was too near Poona to be comfortable with that in his Palace. He gave it to me on the platform in full view. The damned coward. He wanted to show that he had given it to me. He asked me to keep it. He said I should be safe with it at Chitipur.

THRESK. Chitipur's a long way from Poona.

BALLANTYNE. A devil of a long way, but not enough of a long way. With this trial coming on in Calcutta, I go in danger of my life so long as I have that picture in my possession.

THRESK. Why don't you destroy it? (*Throws photograph on table.*)

BALLANTYNE. Yes. I ask myself that. (*Picks up photograph.*) But I can't. That's to own these fellows my masters, and I won't. By God I won't. I may be every kind of brute, but I have been bred up in this service. For twenty years I have lived in it. And the service is too strong for me. No, I can't destroy it.

THRESK. Well, what do you want me to do?

(*Change red signal at back to blue.*)

BALLANTYNE. You are going straight back to England. I want you to take it with you out of Chitipur. You'll be safe with it. When you get home you can give it to the big-wigs at the India Office. (*Puts photograph on table.*)

THRESK. All right. I'll take it. (*Picks up photograph.*)

BALLANTYNE. Thank you! (*Takes photograph out of* THRESK'S *hand.*) I'd better go with you to the railway station. I'll give it you there.

THRESK. As the Rajah gave it to you? I see it's true.

BALLANTYNE. What?

THRESK. That all bullies are cowards too.

BALLANTYNE. What the devil do you mean?

THRESK. Why talk to me like that? I am not your wife. Besides, I am going to take your photograph. And I'll take it at the railway station.

BALLANTYNE. No, take it now! (*Throws photograph on table.* THRESK *picks it up and puts it in his pocket.*) It's evident you don't know much about India. (*Locks case.*) I have only got to leave this case unlocked for a night, it'll be known I haven't got it any more, quicker than you could wire the news.

(*Enter* BARAM SINGH, C., *drops curtain, salaams.*)

BARAM. Huzoor! Railgharri hai.

BALLANTYNE. Your train is signalled.

THRESK. Oh, is it? (BARAM *exits* R.C.)

BALLANTYNE (*rising*). It's all right. I have sent word that it is not to start without you. I'll go and see that your camel is ready. Stella! Stella! Mr. Thresk is going!

(*He goes out* C. THRESK *knocks ash into ash tray.* STELLA *enters* R.L.E. *They stand looking at one another.*)

STELLA. Why did you come? (*Below chair* R.)

THRESK (*comes forward towards* STELLA). I was in India. I had heard that when your father and mother died some friends had taken you out to India. I asked for news of you in Bombay. I heard that you were at Chitipur—married. I was in doubt whether to come. I am glad that I did come.

STELLA. And I am sorry. (*Sits in chair* R.)

THRESK. Why? (*Draws chair from* R. *of table, sits.*)

STELLA. You mustn't think I wasn't glad to see you. I was—at the first moment I was very glad. I could not help it. All the years rolled away. I remembered the Sussex Downs the day we rode from Arundel to Cocking and saw the Roman road, and across far hills the spire of Chichester. How long was that ago?

THRESK. Seven years.

STELLA. A century. Oh, I am sorry that you came.

THRESK. And I am glad. I shouldn't have known, I should have gone back. I should have left you here. (*Pause.*) I shouldn't have known.

STELLA. There is nothing to know.

THRESK. Nothing? (*He is looking at her throat.*)

STELLA. I fell and hurt myself. (*Puts her hand to her throat.*)

(*Ring bells.*)

THRESK. It was he—Ballantyne.

STELLA. No!

THRESK. He illtreats you. He drinks, and illtreats you.

STELLA. You asked questions in Bombay where we are known. You were not told that.

THRESK. And why? Because it's here, in camp, that he lets himself go. He told me as much. No one to carry tales—no one to spy. In the town he sets a guard upon himself. Yes, but he looks forward to the months of camp when there are no next-door neighbours, and the devilish truth of him can have its way.

STELLA. No! that's not true. To-night he—he has had a long day, he was tired, and when you are tired—as a rule he's different.

THRESK. That won't do. Why, he imagines he is being watched and followed. To-night he saw an arm and a hand reach in beneath the tent. There was no hand, no arm. It's not because on one day he's tired, that these delusions come. You can't stay on. (*Rises.*) It has got to end.

STELLA. I can leave him when I wish.

THRESK. You will?

STELLA. When I wish. (BALLANTYNE'S *voice outside.*)

BALLANTYNE. Mr. Thresk!

STELLA. There! (*Rises.*) Your camel's ready. It's good-bye. Do you still collect miniatures?

THRESK. When I can. I have very little time now.

STELLA. I know. The world has gone well with you; I read of it. You are a great man now. You always meant to be. Hard work?

THRESK. Very. Four o'clock in the morning till midnight, perhaps later.

BALLANTYNE. Mr. Thresk! (*Outside.*)

STELLA. But it is worth it. (THRESK *goes up* R., *gets hat, turns. Then* STELLA *follows up, speaking as she goes.*) Oh, you have got everything!

THRESK. Everything? (*Movement towards* STELLA.)

STELLA (*draws back a little*). Everything you asked for. Good-bye. (*Shakes hands with both hands.*) You must go.

THRESK. I'll write to you from Bombay.

STELLA. You won't have time.

THRESK. Yes, I will.

STELLA. That letter will never reach me. Good-bye!

BALLANTYNE. Mr. Thresk! (*Outside.*)

STELLA. There go! You must go! Married yet?

THRESK. No.

STELLA. Still too busy getting on.

THRESK. No, that's not the reason. Stella! (*Strong movement towards her.*)

STELLA (*away and up to curtain, pulls it aside, her back to* THRESK). Nor is Stella. That's mere politeness and good manners. We must show the dear creatures the great part they play in our lives. (THRESK *goes down, puts pipe on lower end of table* C.) In fifteen days you'll be steaming up the channel. (*He goes.*)

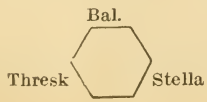
(*She drops the curtain and comes back. She stands with her hands to her face to shut out the vivid rush of recollections. She gives a sob, then with a gesture of despair she throws up her hands. Her eyes fall upon the little rifle now standing by the bureau. They become wide and fixed. A dreadful purpose dawns in them. She picks up rifle, places butt on floor, and leans her heart over the muzzle. She looks round and takes the hunting crop. Holding the end of it in her hand, she measures it against the rifle, trying the trigger with the handle, to make sure that she can fire it off with it. She puts the crop on bureau. She still has rifle in her hands when the tent-door opens and* THRESK *returns.*)

THRESK (*outside*). I won't be a second. (*He advances to* R. *of table inside; stops.*) I left my pipe on the table.

STELLA. Did you?

THRESK. Yes, here it is on the table. (*Picks it up.*)

(*Warn curtain.*)



STELLA (*she opens the breech of the rifle carelessly*). This is my little rifle. I was seeing whether it was clean.

(BALLANTYNE *appears, come above table.*)

BALLANTYNE. I don't think we ought to keep the train waiting longer than can be helped. You are looking at Stella's popgun. Come on.

STELLA (*to* BALLANTYNE). You are going to the station ?

BALLANTYNE. No. I am just going to see Mr. Thresk start from the camp.

STELLA (*to* THRESK). Good-bye, then.

THRESK (*reluctantly*). Good-bye.

(*He and* BALLANTYNE *go off. The curtains fall over the entrance behind them.* STELLA *at once runs to her bureau, and opens first one drawer, then another. She looks round the room, troubled. She runs to* BALLANTYNE'S *table and looks over it. Then she stands, trying to think quickly. Outside* BALLANTYNE *is heard again.*)

BALLANTYNE. Sit firm, or you'll be thrown off as the beast gets up.

(STELLA *runs to table on which tantalus stands with an air of recollection. She pulls open the drawers.*)

STELLA (*in a whisper of satisfaction*). Ah !

BALLANTYNE. There, you are all right, now. Hold on, and good night.

(*She takes from the drawer a small cardboard box, which she opens, and shakes as she opens. There are cartridges in it which rattle. She hurries back to* L. *of the table. Outside* BALLANTYNE *is heard again.*)

(STELLA *feverishly inserts a cartridge in the breech of the rifle. As she is doing this* BALLANTYNE *re-*

enters. He stands looking at STELLA. STELLA *recoils, fixing him with terrified eyes.*)

BALLANTYNE. So you will make a scene before strangers, will you? Damn you. (*Movement forwards.*) I'll teach you. (STELLA *closes breech of rifle.* BALLANTYNE *swings chair* R. *of table round.*) Why don't you shoot yourself and rid me of a fool?

(BALLANTYNE *is moving towards her meaning to strike her.* STELLA *points rifle towards him from her hip.* BALLANTYNE *stops. He stands for a moment. Then with a gasp he recoils from her as the curtain falls.*)

SPECIAL NOTES FOR ACT II, SCENE I

On Stage.

2 candlesticks and candles, syphon, matches, whisky, 2 glasses, on table up R.
Keys in doors R. and L.
Lamps lit, R.L. and small table L.
Candles on table C. OUT.
Curtains closed except entrance window, where curtains and window are open.
Notepaper, envelopes, pens, on table C.
Cigarettes, matches, tobacco, ash tray, on table down R.
Ash tray L. of table C.

Hand Props.

Cuttings—Pettifer.
Pamphlet—Hazlewood.
Cigarette case—Dick.

Plays 16 *minutes*

ACT II

SCENE I. *The Library.*

Double doors lead to drawing-room R. *Another door to hall, etc.,* L. *As the curtain rises* STELLA *is heard singing to the accompaniment of a piano in the drawing-room.* Mrs. PETTIFER, *followed by her husband, enters* R.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Another moment and I should have screamed.

PETTIFER. It was to avoid that alarming phenomenon that I brought you here.

Mrs. PETTIFER (L.C.). It's sheer lunacy.

PETTIFER (C.). 'Sh, my dear.

Mrs. PETTIFER. I won't. If I am to 'sh I shall explode. (*Goes* L.)

PETTIFER. You mustn't explode here, Margaret. With these old houses you never know what will happen. (*Stop music.*)

Mrs. PETTIFER. It's very well for you to laugh, Robert, but——

(*Enter* DICK HAZLEWOOD, R.)

Mrs. PETTIFER. Dick!

DICK. Yes, Aunt Margaret.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Is your father mad?

DICK. I shouldn't go so far as that.

Mrs. PETTIFER. I should. (*Sits on settee* L.)

PETTIFER. Really, my dear! You are after all speaking to his son.

(DICK *takes cigarette out of case and lights it at table down* R.)

Mrs. PETTIFER. Of my brother.

PETTIFER (L.C.). I admit that for a man of his local importance, with his property and his stake in the country, his views are a little peculiar.

DICK. For instance?

PETTIFER. He has paid out of his own pocket the fines of all the people in Little Beding who were convicted for not having their babies vaccinated.

DICK. Oh, of course he'd do that. He's anti-everything. Everything I mean which experience has established and prudence could suggest.

PETTIFER. Then he wants to sell the navy for old iron and abolish the army.

DICK. Yes. He's like that, too—I can't deny it.

Mrs. PETTIFER. I should think not, indeed. He has written a pamphlet to enforce his views upon the subject.

DICK. You should bless your stars, Aunt Margaret, that there is only one! (PETTIFER *goes up* L., *then round to fireplace* R.) He suffers from pamphlets. (DICK *sits in armchair* R.) He writes 'em and he prints 'em, and every Member of Parliament gets one of 'em for nothing. Pamphlets do for him what the gout does for other old gentlemen—they carry off from his system a great number of disquieting ailments. He's on to prison reform now. Have you heard him on prison reform?

Mrs. PETTIFER. No—and I don't want to. He made a speech yesterday in Midhurst. Intolerable, I call it. He denounced his own countrymen as a race of oppressors.

DICK. He would. (*Rises.*) But I don't think, Aunt Margaret, (*Comes* L.C. *to above tea table.*) that you understand my father. He was born pre-

destined to believe that all the people whom he knows are invariably wrong, and all the people whom he doesn't know as invariably right. And, when I feel inclined to deplore his abuse of his own country, I console myself with the reflection that he would be the staunchest friend of England that England ever had, if only he had been born in Germany.

PETTIFER. It's astonishing to me that he allows you to remain in the Army.

DICK. Theoretically it's a great grief to him. (*Comes to settee below table* C., *sits on* L. *arm.*) But you see I have done fairly well, and actually he's fit to burst himself with pride. He's like that, too. Every sentimental philosopher sooner or later breaks his head against his own theories.

(*White warning; music* R., *first entrance.*)

Mrs. PETTIFER. Dick, I believe you are the only person in the world who has any control over him.

DICK. Yes. Even in my pinafore I learnt the great lesson that to control one's parents is the first duty of the modern child.

(*Blue light; music* R., *first entrance.*)

Mrs. PETTIFER. Then why don't you argue him out of all this nonsense.

DICK. Because it's much better fun pulling his leg. (DICK *comes down a little listening to singing.*)

PETTIFER. H'm! Even to-night? (*Also listening to music and singing.*)

DICK. I don't understand.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Are you pulling his leg to-night, Dick?

DICK. Would you mind speaking plainly, Aunt Margaret?

Mrs. PETTIFER (*rising and coming* L. *of* DICK). *Who* is singing in the drawing-room?

DICK. Mrs. Ballantyne.

Mrs. PETTIFER. For *whom* is this small party given?

(*Red, white and blue light; stop music.*)

DICK. Mrs. Ballantyne.

Mrs. PETTIFER. A woman who has stood in the dock on a capital charge; who has been accused of killing her husband.

DICK. And has been acquitted.

Mrs. PETTIFER. She wouldn't have been acquitted if I had been on the jury.

DICK. Very likely not. But you weren't, you see.

Mrs. PETTIFER. She is asked to dinner here. We are invited, without a word of warning, to meet her. It's outrageous. Dick, of all the impossible things your father has ever done.

DICK. Aunt Margaret! I am sorry to interrupt you. But I want you to understand that I am with my father heart and soul to-night.

(*Enter* Mr. HAZLEWOOD, R., *pamphlet in hand.*)

DICK. Where have you left Mrs. Ballantyne?

HAZLEWOOD. My sister Alice is with her. (*Movement forward from* DICK. Mrs. PETTIFER *joins* PETTIFER *up* R.) You leave her, Dick! She could always get men to champion her. What she wants is the friendly voice and chatter of a woman. She has changed already. (HAZLEWOOD *takes* DICK'S *arm and takes him* L.C.) She has lost the tragic look. Ah, Dick! we have done a fine thing to-night!

DICK. You'll find that Aunt Margaret doesn't agree with you.

HAZLEWOOD. Your Aunt Margaret is afflicted with all the primæval ferocity of the average woman.

Mrs. PETTIFER. What? (*Coming down* R.C.)

HAZLEWOOD (*goes to* Mrs. PETTIFER). I have brought you, Margaret, the advance copy of my new pamphlet. It has just come by the post. I

should like you to read it. It's called "The Prison Walls must cast no Shadow."

DICK. Oh, come, father. All walls cast shadows. It depends upon the position of the sun.

HAZLEWOOD (*comes to* DICK). The phrase, my boy, is a metaphor. I develop in this pamphlet my belief that a convict, once he has expiated his offence, should upon his release be restored to the precise position in society which he held before, with all its privileges unimpaired. (*Gives pamphlet to* Mrs. PETTIFER, *who goes up and meets* PETTIFER R. *of* C. *table. She gives him the pamphlet.*)

DICK (L.C.). You are going it, father!

HAZLEWOOD (C.). Dick, I thought that I should have had your approval. It seemed to me that a change was taking place in you, that the player of polo, the wild hunter of an inoffensive little white ball, was developing into the humanitarian.

DICK. Well, father, I am beginning to think that there is something in your theories. But I am not yet prepared to admit that the man who has served a term of penal servitude has as much right to sit down at my dinner table as he had before.

HAZLEWOOD. Dick!

Mrs. PETTIFER. He makes an exception in favour of Mrs. Ballantyne. (*Comes to by armchair* R. PETTIFER *follows her.* HAZLEWOOD *goes up to* L. *of table* C.)

DICK. You speak of her as if she had been tried and condemned. In fact, she was tried and acquitted.

PETTIFER. Ye-es. (R.C.)

DICK. Come, Uncle Robert! (*Crosses to* L. *of* PETTIFER. Mrs PETTIFER *sits* R.) You are a solicitor with a great business and a wide experience.

PETTIFER. Not of criminal cases, Dick!

DICK. Still you must have formed an opinion.

(HAZLEWOOD *sits* R. *of tea table.*)

PETTIFER. This trial took place more than two years ago. I read the accounts of it, it is true, day

by day, as I travelled in the morning train to London. But they were summaries.

DICK. Full summaries.

PETTIFER. No doubt. The trial made a great deal of noise in the world. But they were not full enough for me. Even if my memory of those newspaper reports were clear, I should hesitate to sit in judgment. But my memory isn't clear. (DICK *goes up* L. *to table* C.) Let me see what I do remember. The—well—let us call it the catastrophe—(PETTIFER *sits* R. *of settee* C.) took place in a tent in some state of Rajputana.

DICK. Yes. (*Coming* L. *of settee* C.)

PETTIFER. It took place at night. The man, a drunken brute, was found shot through the heart by a bullet from a rook-rifle which Mrs. Ballantyne was in the habit of using.

DICK. Yes.

PETTIFER. He was found late one night, I think by a servant. Mrs. Ballantyne was asleep in her bed. A man had been dining with them that night.

DICK. Yes.

PETTIFER. Oh, yes, I begin to remember——

DICK. Well?

PETTIFER. That's all I remember except—except that there was left upon my mind, when the verdict was published, a vague feeling of doubt.

Mrs. PETTIFER. There! Now what do you say, Dick?

(DICK *puts cigarette in ash tray on table* C.)

DICK. I say that we have in this house the verbatim reports of the trial published in the Bombay *Times of India*.

PETTIFER. Oh, have you?

HAZLEWOOD. Yes. I sent for the verbatim reports when I was thinking of championing this maligned lady; I have them in my study. Come,

Robert, (*Half rises; sits again.*) I'll show you them now!

PETTIFER. No, really! I refuse to mix myself up in the affair at all. I have already said more than I meant to.

DICK. I think now—since you have said so much—that you must go further, Uncle Robert. Consider! It is cruelly hard that a woman like Mrs. Ballantyne, who has endured all the horrors of a trial, the publicity, the suspense, the dread risk that justice might miscarry, should have afterwards to suffer the treatment of a leper.

Mrs. PETTIFER. She shouldn't have come to Little *Beding*.

DICK. And why not? Here she was born. Here she was known. Here her father and mother lived, first in the Manor House when they were rich, then, after they had lost their money, in the cottage where Mrs. Ballantyne now makes her home. (STELLA *enters* R., *closes door.*) What else should she do but come back to Little Beding and hold her head high! I respect her pride for doing it.

(Mr. *and* Mrs. PETTIFER *rise and go up to fireplace.*)

(STELLA *comes* C.)

STELLA. Thank you, Captain Hazlewood; but pride had nothing to do with it. I came back here, because all through that trial at Bombay, in the heat of the court, in the close captivity of my cell, I was conscious of just one real over-mastering passion—to feel the wind blowing against one's face upon the Sussex Downs, just to see the bare green hills with the white chalk hollows in their sides and the forests in the valley marching like soldiers to Chichester. I was mad for the look and the smell and sound of them. That's why I came back to Little Beding as soon as I was free. (*Crosses to* HAZLEWOOD, *holds out her* R. *hand,* HAZLEWOOD *takes it in both of*

his.) But I was doubly fortunate, for I found friends as well.

HAZLEWOOD. And friends who will not fail you. To-night begins the great change. You'll see.

STELLA. Thank you. Good night! (*Up above table* L.)

HAZLEWOOD. You are going?

STELLA. It's late. I have said good-bye to Miss Hazlewood.

HAZLEWOOD. Where is Alice?

STELLA. She has gone upstairs. Good night! (*To* Mr. *and* Mrs. PETTIFER.)

PETTIFER. Good night.

(DICK *helps* STELLA *to put scarf on.*)

DICK. Don't let Uncle Robert go, father. I'll be back in five minutes.

HAZLEWOOD. I won't. (*Rises.*)

PETTIFER. No, but really——

Mrs. PETTIFER. Robert, I should like to know your opinion—— (*Comes down* R.)

PETTIFER. Very well. (*Then follows* Mrs. PETTIFER.) Show me the newspapers.

HAZLEWOOD (*crossing* R. *and off*). Very well. They are in the study. I'll get them out for you.

(Mrs. PETTIFER, PETTIFER *and* HAZLEWOOD *exeunt* R. HAZLEWOOD *shuts door.*)

STELLA. Oh, I must thank you for to-night, you and your father. I have no words.

DICK. Good! For there's need of none. Will you ride to-morrow?

STELLA. I should love to.

DICK. Seven? Is that too early?

STELLA. No. That's the good time. We have the day at its best and the world to ourselves.

DICK. Good! I'll bring the same horse round. He knows you now.

STELLA. Thank you!

DICK. I'll see you to your door. (*Going up* L.C.)

STELLA. I won't drag you away. It's only a step. I can cross the meadow by the garden gate. That brings me to my door.

DICK. You can't do that! (*Comes down* R. *of* STELLA.) The meadow's drenched. You'd be ankle deep in dew. You must promise never to go home across the meadow when you dine with us. (STELLA *looks at him.*) What's the matter?

STELLA. Don't you understand? (*Comes down to settee* L. *of tea table.*) Why should you? Do you know that place I fill in Little Beding? (*Sits.* DICK *comes down* R. *of tea table.*) Years ago, when I was a child, there was supposed to be a pig-faced woman. (DICK *sits* R. *of tea table.*) She lived in the Market Square. Strangers were pointed out the house. It was one of the sights of Little Beding. Sometimes you were shown her shadow after dusk between the lamp and the blind. Sometimes you might have even caught a glimpse of her slinking late at night along the dark alleys. Well, the pig-faced woman has gone, and I have taken her place. I am the curiosity, I am the freak. The townsfolk take a pride in me, just the same pride they took in her. And I find that pride more difficult to bear even than all the aversion of the Pettifers. Then you speak to me! (*Rises up between settee and table.* DICK *rises and follows.*) You shall see me to my door. I'll not cross the meadow. I'll go round by the road. Oh, it's rather good to be looked after.

DICK. Stella. (*His two hands on* STELLA'S *arms.*)

STELLA. Oh, thank you.

(*They go out by bow-window* L.C. *After they have gone* HAZLEWOOD *and* Mrs. PETTIFER *come on* R., *leaving door open.*)

HAZLEWOOD. Let's leave Robert for a moment to those newspapers. I trust his judgment and I want him to think as I do. (*Coming* L.C.)

Mrs. PETTIFER. Will you trust his judgment if he doesn't? (*Following him.*)

HAZLEWOOD. But he will. (*Turns.*) He must.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Harold!

HAZLEWOOD. Well?

Mrs. PETTIFER (C.). If you have no consideration for us, none for your own position, none for the neighbourhood, if you will at all costs force this woman upon us, don't you think you might still spare a thought for your son?

HAZLEWOOD (L.C.). What in the world do you mean?

Mrs. PETTIFER. Yesterday—only yesterday—I saw him with Stella Ballantyne on the river—in the dusk—in a Canadian canoe. She had discarded her black. She was wearing a white lace frock with a big hat.

HAZLEWOOD. I—I don't think I have anything against big hats. (*Goes* L., *sits lower end of settee* L.)

Mrs. PETTIFER (*comes to below chair* R. *of table*). She was trailing her hand in the water—outrageous, I call it! He rides with her in the morning. He lends her a horse. He bullies his acquaintances to call on her. He brandishes his friendship with her like a flag. Don't you see what it all means? (*Over table.*)

HAZLEWOOD. Yes. The boy's better nature is awakening.

Mrs. PETTIFER. The boy. (*Sits.*) He's thirty, if he's a day. And you let it go on.

HAZLEWOOD. Gladly. Margaret, there was a time when Dick disappointed me. The mere healthful, well-groomed look of him was irritatingly conventional. He had no ardour of reforms. He had no wish to help in the regeneration of our times. But now he is beginning to see eye to eye with me.

Mrs. PETTIFER. He said a shrewd thing to-night, Harold.

HAZLEWOOD. What?

Mrs. PETTIFER. That sentimental philosophers had a knack of breaking their heads against their own theories. I hope that won't happen to you. *Where* is Dick *now?*

HAZLEWOOD. He is seeing Mrs. Ballantyne home.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Exactly.

HAZLEWOOD. Margaret, you want to make me uncomfortable. But you shan't.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Being friends is one thing; marrying is another.

HAZLEWOOD. Marrying! Nonsense! (*He rises and looks towards* PETTIFER, *who comes thoughtfully from* R. *He has some newspaper cuttings in his hand.* HAZLEWOOD *looks anxiously towards him, goes* L.C. *to him.*) Ah, here's Robert!

PETTIFER. I should like to borrow these reports for a day or two, Hazlewood.

HAZLEWOOD. You won't lose them?

PETTIFER. Oh, no!

HAZLEWOOD. Well, did you form an opinion?

PETTIFER. One.

HAZLEWOOD. What is that?

PETTIFER. That no other verdict could have been given, that on the evidence produced at the trial Mrs. Ballantyne was properly and inevitably acquitted.

HAZLEWOOD. Ah! You hear that, Margaret? (*Turns to* Mrs PETTIFER.)

PETTIFER. And yet I am not satisfied.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Ah!

PETTIFER. That is why I wish to borrow these reports and go carefully through them. I am interested—I own it. The chief witness, whose evidence made the acquittal certain, was a man I know. A barrister called Thresk. I have more than once briefed him myself. He's a man with the highest reputation, with a great practice, a great future—straightforward—honest. A man with everything

to lose if he lied as a witness in a trial. And yet—I am not satisfied.

HAZLEWOOD. Why?

PETTIFER. I should very much like to put a question or two to Thresk.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Why don't you? You know him.

PETTIFER. Not enough. It would be an impertinence; for although I look upon Dick as a son, I am not his father. But if you, Hazlewood, were to get him down here and he could be induced to speak—why then, it might be different. (*Seriously.*) If there is anything to be known, Thresk knows it.

HAZLEWOOD (L.C.). But I couldn't get him down here. I have no excuse.

PETTIFER (C.). Oh, yes, you have. You collect miniatures. Some time ago you bought one of the first Duke of Richmond. You had a discussion as to its authenticity in *Notes and Queries* with——

HAZLEWOOD. With a man *called* Thresk.

PETTIFER. The same. He's an authority. So there you have it. You know what collectors are. Get him down to see your miniatures. It wouldn't be the first time you have invited a stranger to see them. Get him down to Little Beding and confront him unexpectedly with Mrs. Ballantyne. Let me be there.

(*Ring bells.*)

HAZLEWOOD. I couldn't. It would look like a trap.

PETTIFER. Oh, it *would* be a trap. It wouldn't be a pretty thing to do. Come, Margaret, we must be going. (Mrs. PETTIFER *rises, goes* L., PETTIFER *follows. To* HAZLEWOOD.) Remember. If there's anything to be known, Thresk knows it. (*Enter* DICK L.C., *pauses for a moment, goes* R. *and gets candlestick from table up* R.) 9, King's Bench Walk. That's his address.

HAZLEWOOD. I couldn't.

PETTIFER. Choose a Friday evening. That's your best chance of getting him.

HAZLEWOOD. I couldn't think of it.

PETTIFER. And let me know when he is coming. Good night! (HAZLEWOOD *is following.*) Don't bother about seeing us out.

(PETTIFER *and* MRS. PETTIFER *go out* L.)

DICK. Father! (*Comes* R.C., *puts candlestick on table* R.)

HAZLEWOOD. Yes! (*Comes* C.)

DICK. There's nothing like acting up to your theories, eh?

HAZLEWOOD. Nothing! Look at my life!

DICK. Yes, and now look at mine. I am going to marry Stella Ballantyne!

HAZLEWOOD. Oh!

DICK. We agreed to champion her cause, didn't we?

HAZLEWOOD. Yes.

DICK. You took a good step forward to-night. I have taken a step further.

HAZLEWOOD. A long *stride*, Dick, and perhaps a precipitate one. I think you might have asked my consent first.

DICK. So Stella said.

HAZLEWOOD. Ah!

(*Warn curtain.*)

DICK. But I was able to remove all her fears, for I was able to tell her that you would welcome our marriage with all your heart; for you would look upon it as a triumph for your principles, and a sure sign that my better nature was at last thoroughly awake.

HAZLEWOOD. No doubt. Quite so. (*Crosses* R.) Yes. (*Turns to* DICK.) But, of course, there's no hurry. I don't want to lose you; and you have your career to think of, too, haven't you?

DICK. A career in the Army, father?

HAZLEWOOD. We don't want to prejudice that, do we? So it would be advisable, perhaps, for a little while, to let the matter remain in abeyance—to —er—well, to keep it quiet.

DICK. Oh, no! No secrecy, father. At once we invite suspicion. Nothing could be more damaging to Stella. Our chance is to hold our heads high. (*Puts his* R. *arm round* HAZLEWOOD'S *shoulder.*) I know we shan't find it all smooth and easy. But no secrecy, father. I mean to make a life which has been very troubled know some comfort and a little happiness. (*Goes* R. *and lights candle.*) Let us go to bed. If you'll go first I'll turn out the lights and lock up.

HAZLEWOOD. No, Dick. I have a letter to write before I go to bed. (DICK *goes off* R.) Nine, that was the number. Nine, King's Bench Walk. (*He sits at writing table. Turns on electric candles and takes pen up.*)

(*The curtain descends for a moment to mark the lapse of time.*)

(CURTAIN ON LAST WORD.)

SPECIAL NOTES FOR ACT II, SCENE II

On Stage.

Pamphlets on R. of table C.
Tobacco jar, lid off.
Pipes.
Notepaper and envelope on table C.
Tea things.
Curtains open.
Matches on table down R.
"Globe" off R.
Reading lamp L.L. struck.
,, ,, L.U. ,,
Change flowers.

Hand Props.

Cuttings, papers with holes —Pettifer.
Pipe—Thresk.

Plays 27 minutes.

SCENE 2. *Same Scene.* HUBBARD *opens the door,* L., *and enters, followed by* THRESK. HUBBARD *lets* THRESK *pass him, closes door, goes round tables* L.L. *and* C. *to* R.

HUBBARD. I thought that Mr. Hazlewood was here, Sir. I'll find him.

(*Enter* HAZLEWOOD, R.)

HAZLEWOOD (R.C.). Ah, Mr. Thresk.
THRESK (C.). Yes.

(*They shake hands.* HUBBARD *exits* R.)

HAZLEWOOD. It is most kind of you to come. Ever since we had our little correspondence I have been anxious to take your opinion upon my collection. Though how in the world you manage to find time to have an opinion at all upon the subject is most perplexing. I never open *The Times* but I see your name figuring in some important case.

THRESK. And I, Mr. Hazlewood, never open my mail without receiving a pamphlet from you. I am not the only active man in the world.

HAZLEWOOD. Little reflections worked out more or less to completeness—may I say that—in the quiet of a rural life. You have read perhaps "The Prison Walls."

(*He turns towards bundle of pamphlets, takes one up.*)

THRESK. I have got mine. Every man in England should have one. No man in England has a right to two.

HAZLEWOOD. Really, you are most kind. To think that you have found time to read it. (*Comes down* R. *of* THRESK *with pamphlet.*) "The Prison Walls must cast no Shadow." Do you think the title quite appropriate?

THRESK. I have not heard any other suggested.

HAZLEWOOD. I am inclined upon reflection to think it not quite accurate. As my son says, all walls cast shadows.

THRESK. Yes, the trouble is to know where and on whom the shadow is going to fall.

HAZLEWOOD. Yes. I am not sure that this particular pamphlet isn't something of a mistake. But, after all, these little trifles—sparks from the tiny flame of my midnight oil—must not lead us astray. You came to look at my miniatures. (*Puts pamphlet down on table* C.) You shall give me your opinion after tea.

THRESK. I shall be delighted. But you must not expect too much knowledge from me.

HAZLEWOOD. Oh! Pettifer tells me that you are a great authority.

THRESK. Then Pettifer's wrong. Pettifer! Isn't he a solicitor?

HAZLEWOOD. Yes. He told me that he knew you. He married one of my sisters, and lives at Little Beding. He is coming here now to tea.

THRESK. Then, before he comes, I should like a wash. I have been for two hours in a train.

HAZLEWOOD. Certainly. Your bag will already have been taken up. (*Enter servant* R. *Servant puts "Globe" on* R. *of table* C., *goes to door* R. THRESK *crosses* R.) Show Mr. Thresk his room. I think you will find everything you want. Meanwhile I'll go and telephone to Pettifer that you are here. (*Goes* L.)

(THRESK *and servant go out* R. *Servant crosses door. Enter* DICK, L.)

HAZLEWOOD. Well, Dick, how did the match go ?

DICK. We beat them easily. Isn't Stella here ?

(*Goes* C. *up* L.C. *a little, then down again.*)

HAZLEWOOD. She has not come yet. She won't have forgotten ?

DICK (C.). No. But she's late. We have arranged to look over a house this afternoon. So we shan't have much time for your party. Who's coming ?

HAZLEWOOD. Oh, it isn't a party ! There's only Pettifer and a barrister who has come down from London to look at my miniatures. (*Moves to go off* L.)

DICK. Oh, is that all ? Father !

HAZLEWOOD. Well ? (*Coming* L.C.)

DICK. Why don't you like Stella any longer ?

HAZLEWOOD. A lawyer's question, Richard. You assume that I have ceased to like her.

DICK. Stella noticed it.

HAZLEWOOD. And complained to you, of course.

DICK. Stella *doesn't* complain. Father, there can be no backing down now. We are both agreed upon that, aren't we ? Suppose that I were first to blazon my trust in a woman, whom others suspected, by becoming engaged to her, and then endorsed their suspicions by breaking off the engagement ? Suppose that I were to do that ?

HAZLEWOOD. Well ?

DICK. You wouldn't think very *much* of me, would you ? Not you, nor any man. A cur—that would be the word, the only word, wouldn't it ?

HAZLEWOOD. Suppose that Stella had deceived you ?

DICK (*enter* STELLA L.C. *at back*). She hasn't done that. Now I'll go and change. Ah, there's Stella coming across the lawn.

STELLA (L. *of* DICK). I am afraid that I am late. (*Comes down.*)

HAZLEWOOD (*takes both* STELLA'S *hands*). No, no, just at the right time. How are you, Stella? But there's no need to ask. You look charming, and upon my word you grow younger every day. (L. *of* STELLA.) What a pretty hat! Yes, yes! Will you make tea while I speak a word to some one on the telephone? Thank you. My sister is away, you know.

(HAZLEWOOD *exits* L. DICK *goes* R. *a little, puts hat in armchair* R.)

STELLA (C.). I am taken again into favour.

DICK (R.C.). That shouldn't distress you at all events, Stella.

STELLA. Yet it does. For I'm asking myself why? I have been in the black books for a long time. Why am I in favour this afternoon?

DICK. Are you sure you have ever been in the black books at all?

STELLA. Oh, yes. Ever since you—took me home—that night.

DICK (R.C.). No!

STELLA (C.). Mr. Pettifer dined here that night.

DICK. Well?

STELLA. He did the harm. He's an *enemy* of mine.

DICK. Stella, you see *enemies* everywhere.

STELLA. Is it wonderful? Dick, I couldn't lose you. I couldn't, I couldn't. I have often thought it would be better for you to go right away, and never see me again. I have tried to tell you, Dick—I mean that I have tried to tell you that I wouldn't suffer so very much if you did, but I never could do it. My lips shook so. I could never speak the words. To think of you living in a house with somebody else. No! And now I can't lose you.

DICK. It's rather late to say that, isn't it, Stella?

STELLA. Yes, thank God! (*Kiss. Comes to above tea table.*) Who is coming to tea?

DICK. Pettifer. (*Up to settee* C.)

STELLA. My enemy. (*Pours water into teapot.*)

DICK. And you and my father and I.

STELLA. That's four. But there are one, two, three, four—five cups. Your aunt's away. Who is the fifth? (*Empties teapot.*)

DICK. Oh, I know. A man from London, whom my father has got down to examine his miniatures. (*Comes above chair* R. *of tea table; he cannot see* STELLA'S *face.*)

STELLA. His miniatures!

DICK. Yes, a barrister.

STELLA. What's his name? (*Puts tea in teapot; pours in hot water.*)

DICK. I don't know.

STELLA. Your father wouldn't tell you?

DICK. I didn't ask. He often has collectors down. Dull dogs! When he does, I go out to dinner.

STELLA. You didn't even know that this one was coming at all?

DICK. No, not until a minute ago.

STELLA. And I was specially asked to come to tea.

DICK. Well, we can't give them much time if we are to see that house before half-past five.

STELLA. And you want to change. Run away, and do it now.

DICK. I will. (*Goes* R.C.)

STELLA (*to* DICK). Dick! Look at me! I am sure of you!

DICK. I think we ought to be fairly happy in that house.

STELLA. Anywhere, Dick—anywhere on earth. (*Kiss. Exit* DICK R., STELLA *stands for a second, goes up to writing-table, and writes hurriedly. She speaks aloud the words she is writing.*) "Be prepared to see me. Be prepared to hear news of me. I will

see you afterwards if you like; this is a trap. Be kind." (*She goes to bell, rings it. She puts letter in envelope.* HUBBARD *appears* R.) Hubbard! (*Addressing and sealing envelope.*)

HUBBARD. Yes, m'm.

STELLA. Mr. Thresk is in the house?

HUBBARD. Yes.

STELLA. Where is he?

HUBBARD. In his room.

STELLA. You are sure?

HUBBARD. Yes, m'm.

STELLA. Will you take this note to him at once? (*Gives him letter.*) Give it into his hands, please. Don't make any mistake.

(*Exit* HUBBARD R.)

Enter PETTIFER *and* HAZLEWOOD, L., *talking.*)

HAZLEWOOD. Ah, here we are! Is tea ready?

STELLA. Yes.

HAZLEWOOD. Dick's not here, but we won't wait.

STELLA. Cream and sugar?

PETTIFER. Neither, thanks.

STELLA. Neither! (*To* HAZLEWOOD.) And both for you?

PETTIFER. Dick's playing cricket, isn't he?

STELLA. No, the match is over—our side won easily.

HAZLEWOOD. I have given some study to the subject of cricket.

STELLA. You?

HAZLEWOOD. Yes, and I've formed two theories about the game.

PETTIFER. I am sure of that.

HAZLEWOOD. I have invented two improvements.

PETTIFER. An alteration in the leg-before rule for one, I suppose?

HAZLEWOOD. Not at all. I think in the first place that the game ought to be played with a soft

ball. There is at present a suggestion of violence about it which the use of a soft ball would entirely remove.

PETTIFER. Entirely.

STELLA. But women play cricket. (*Sits.*)

HAZLEWOOD. I cannot, Stella, accept the view that whatever women do must necessarily be right. There *are* instances to the contrary.

PETTIFER. Yes, I come across a few of them in my office.

HAZLEWOOD. And in the second place it ought to be the aim of the victors to lose.

PETTIFER. Yes, that must be right.

STELLA. But why ?

HAZLEWOOD. Because by adopting that system you would be doing something to eradicate that spirit of rivalry, that desire to win, which is at the bottom of half our troubles.

PETTIFER. And all our success.

(*Enter* THRESK R. *behind* STELLA, *who is sitting* R. *of tea table.* STELLA *shows by her face that she is aware he has entered.* HAZLEWOOD *rises, looks down at* PETTIFER, *who is watching* THRESK'S *face.*)

HAZLEWOOD. Ah, you know Mrs. Ballantyne.

THRESK. You !

STELLA. You are surprised to see me again. (*Rises, goes to him, holding out her hand. He takes it.*)

THRESK. I am delighted to see you again.

STELLA. And I to see you. For I have never had a chance of thanking you. Do you know, Mr. Hazlewood, you have done a very cruel thing ? (*Coming to table.*)

HAZLEWOOD. Cruel ! How ? (*Confused.*)

STELLA. In not telling me beforehand that I was going to meet so good a friend of mine. I would have put on my best frock in his honour.

(*Enter* DICK R.)

HAZLEWOOD. Ah, here's my son. Richard !

Let me introduce you. Mr. Thresk, my son. And there's the family. (*Sits.*)

THRESK. The family! Is Mrs. Ballantyne a relation?

DICK. Going to be!

HAZLEWOOD. Yes, Richard and Stella are going to be married.

THRESK (*pause*). Some men have all the luck. (*Towards* DICK.)

DICK. Mr. Thresk, did you say? Not——(*To* STELLA.)

STELLA. Yes.

THRESK. The very man.

DICK (*shakes hands with* THRESK). Thank you! When I think of the horrible net of doubt and assumption in which Stella was coiled, I tell you I feel cold down my spine even now. If you hadn't come forward with your facts——

THRESK. Yes. If I hadn't come forward with my facts. Well, I couldn't well keep them to myself, could I?

DICK. No. (THRESK, DICK *and* STELLA *talk together.*)

PETTIFER (*to* HAZLEWOOD). Well, that's a pretty good failure, I must say.

HAZLEWOOD. What do you think?

PETTIFER. That they share no secret.

HAZLEWOOD. You are satisfied then?

PETTIFER. I didn't say that.

HAZLEWOOD. Sit down, Mr. Thresk. Stella, give Mr. Thresk a cup of tea.

(THRESK *sits* R. *of tea table.* STELLA *pours out cup* DICK *gets hat from armchair, comes* L.C., *then speaks.*)

DICK. And that's all she can do.

THRESK. You are going?

STELLA. Yes.

DICK. We have to look at a house.

THRESK. A house. Yes, I see.

(THRESK *speaks a little doubtfully.* STELLA *glances at him sharply.*)

STELLA. But, Dick, perhaps we could put the inspection off.

THRESK. Not on my account. (DICK *goes up* L.) There's no need for that?

STELLA (*to* HAZLEWOOD). I haven't been asked. But may I come to dinner?

HAZLEWOOD. Of course, my dear. I must have forgotten to ask you. I certainly expect you to dine with us.

STELLA. Thank you. (*To* THRESK.) Then I shall see you again.

THRESK. Yes, to-night.

(*Exeunt* STELLA *and* DICK C.)

HAZLEWOOD (*rising*). Now we might have a look at the miniatures before dinner, eh? (*Rises, goes and takes drawer from cabinet up* L., *puts it on table* C. *Enter* HUBBARD *and servant* L. THRESK *and* PETTIFER *rise.* PETTIFER *comes* L.C. *to* THRESK *while* HAZLEWOOD *is placing drawer upon table and* THRESK *and* PETTIFER *are speaking.* HUBBARD *takes off cake and bread and butter. Servant blows out spirit lamp, takes kettle off.* HUBBARD *takes* THRESK'S *cup, puts it on tray with plates. Servant takes tray off.* HUBBARD *table-cloths, closes door. This should be so timed that the door is closed by the end of* HAZLEWOOD'S *speech at the bottom of this page.*)

PETTIFER. I haven't met you since you led for us in that great Birmingham will suit.

THRESK. No. It wasn't such a tough fight as I thought it was going to be; you see there wasn't a really reliable witness for the defence.

PETTIFER. No, if there had been——

THRESK. We should have been beaten.

HAZLEWOOD. I have the principal ones arranged in this drawer with their approximate dates, as far

as I could obtain them, but there are some about which I am in doubt.

(THRESK *sits above* C. *table.* HAZLEWOOD *stands* R., PETTIFER L.)

THRESK. Ah! You bought that at Lord Mirliton's sale?

HAZLEWOOD. The Marie Antoinette? Yes.

THRESK. I saw it at Christie's and coveted it myself.

HAZLEWOOD. I'm sorry I anticipated you.

THRESK (*taking up miniature*). Hullo!

HAZLEWOOD. Yes.

THRESK. Phew!

PETTIFER. There's nothing like a hobby to turn strangers into friends.

THRESK. And sometimes into enemies.

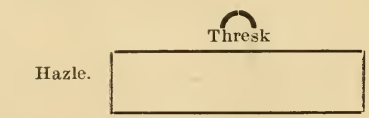
HAZLEWOOD. I am very glad to meet you, Mr. Thresk, for reasons quite outside our common interest.

THRESK. Oh!

HAZLEWOOD. Yes. Being Richard's father, I am naturally concerned in everything which affects him nearly—the trial of Stella Ballantyne, for instance.

THRESK (*looking over miniatures*). Quite so.

HAZLEWOOD. Now you gave evidence?



THRESK. You have no doubt read the evidence I gave?

HAZLEWOOD. To be sure.

THRESK. And, since your son is engaged to Mrs. Ballantyne, I must suppose that you were satisfied with it—as the jury was.

HAZLEWOOD. Yes, but a witness I think only answers the questions put to him.

THRESK. That is so, of course.

HAZLEWOOD. And subsequent reflection might suggest that all the questions which could throw light upon the trial had not been put.

THRESK (*puts miniature down*). It was not, I take it, in order to put to me those questions that you were kind enough to ask me, Mr. Hazlewood, to give my opinion on your miniatures—(*Pause.* HAZLEWOOD *and* PETTIFER *exchange glances.*) for that would have been setting a trap for me, wouldn't it ?

HAZLEWOOD. Oh, no, no ! No, no ! Only, since you *are* here, and since so much is at stake for me —my son's whole happiness—I hoped that you might perhaps give us an answer which would disperse the doubts of some suspicious people.

THRESK. Who are they ?

HAZLEWOOD. Neighbours of ours at Little Beding.

PETTIFER. I for one.

THRESK. Ah ! I thought so I thought I recognized Mr. Pettifer's hand in all this. But he ought to know that the sudden confrontation of a suspected person with unexpected witnesses takes place in those countries where the method is practised, *before* the trial ; not, as you ingeniously arranged it this afternoon, two years after the verdict has been given.

PETTIFER. We had better make a clean breast of it.

THRESK. I think so.

PETTIFER. We are in the wrong. But we have an excuse. Our trouble is very great. Here's my brother-in-law to begin with, whose whole creed of life has been to deride the authority of conventional man—to tilt against established opinion. Mrs. Ballantyne comes back from her trial at Bombay to make her home again in Little Beding. Hazlewood champions her—not for her sake, for the sake of his theories. It pleases his vanity. Now he can prove that he is not as others are.

HAZLEWOOD. Oh, come!

PETTIFER. So he brings her to his house; he canvasses for her, he throws his son in her way. She has beauty. She has suffered very much—look at it how you will, suffered beyond her deserts. She has pretty deferential ways which in a woman of her charm make their inevitable appeal to women as to men. Hazlewood sets the ball rolling and it gets beyond his reach.

THRESK. Yes.

PETTIFER. Finally, his son falls in love with her—not a boy but a man, claiming a man's right to marry where he loves. And at once in Hazlewood conventional man awakes and cries out against the marriage. Then there's myself. I am fond of Dick. I have no child. He will be my heir. I am very fond of him, and I wouldn't say that he shouldn't marry Stella Ballantyne just because Stella Ballantyne has lain under a grave charge of which she has been acquitted. But I am not satisfied! (*Goes down* L.) No, that's the truth, Mr. Thresk. I am not satisfied, in spite of your evidence. I am not sure of what happened in that tent in Chitipur after you had ridden away to catch the night mail to Bombay.

THRESK (*rises, comes down* L.C. HAZLEWOOD *comes down* R. *to* C.). Ask your questions!

HAZLEWOOD. You consent to answer them?

THRESK. I must; for if I don't consent, your suspicions at once are double what they were. But I'm not pleased.

HAZLEWOOD. We practised a little diplomacy.

THRESK. No, Mr. Hazlewood, I'm quite serious. You have got me to your house by a trick. You have abused your position as my host. And but that I should injure a woman whom life has done nothing but injure, I should go out of your door this instant. (*To* PETTIFER.) I am at your service. You doubt my evidence?

PETTIFER. No. But I would like to hear it from your lips. (*Sits top end of settee* L.)

THRESK. Very well, you shall. (*Sits in chair* R. *of tea-table.*) I dined with Ballantyne and his wife on the night when Ballantyne was killed. He was in a state of extreme terror. And as soon as Mrs. Ballantyne left us alone together after dinner, he asked me to do him a service.

PETTIFER. Yes.

THRESK. He had in his despatch box the photograph of a well-known agitator.

PETTIFER. Yes. Bahadur Salak.

THRESK. Ballantyne told me that Salak's friends knew that he possessed it, and that so long as it remained in his possession his life was actually in danger.

PETTIFER. Yes.

THRESK. I promised to take the photograph away with me, but I was inclined to laugh at his fears —until he put his despatch-box on the ground close by the wall of the tent.

PETTIFER. Yes.

THRESK. I then had proof that Salak's friends were desperate. For while he was searching for his keys, a lean brown arm, with a hand delicate as a woman's, reached out under the tent wall, and tried to steal that box before our eyes. Ballantyne raised a hue and cry, a search was made throughout the camp.

HAZLEWOOD (*sits* C.). Yes, the servants bore witness to that.

PETTIFER. But no one was found.

THRESK. No, Ballantyne even said that the thief might be one of his own servants.

PETTIFER. Well?

THRESK. I took the photograph then, knowing quite clearly that Ballantyne was watched and that his life might well be in great danger; and Ballantyne came with me to the edge of his camp and waited

while I mounted the camel and rode off to the station.

PETTIFER. Your theory being that while Ballantyne was away, the thief not knowing that now you had the photograph, slipped into the tent, took up the rook-rifle—

THRESK. Which was standing by Ballantyne's bureau—

PETTIFER. Loaded it—

THRESK. The cartridges were lying open in a drawer—

PETTIFER. And shot Ballantyne on his return.

THRESK. Yes. In addition you must remember that when he was found an hour or so later, Mrs. Ballantyne was in bed and asleep.

PETTIFER. Yes. The tent was thick?

THRESK. Oh, yes—a double lining of curtains. The slight crack of a rook-rifle would easily pass unnoticed.

PETTIFER. In brief, you supplied a reasonable motive for the crime and some evidence of a criminal.

THRESK. Yes.

PETTIFER. And I admit that on your evidence the jury returned the only verdict it was possible to return.

THRESK. What troubles you, then?

PETTIFER. This. The case for the prosecution ran like this: Stephen Ballantyne was a secret drunkard who humiliated his wife in public and beat her in private. She went in terror of him. She bore on more than one occasion the marks of his violence; and upon that night in Chitipur, perhaps in a panic, very likely under extreme provocation, she seized the rook-rifle and put an end to the whole business.

THRESK. That was the case for the Crown.

PETTIFER. Yes, and through the five sittings at the Magisterial inquiry at Bombay, before *you* came upon the scene, that theory was clearly developed.

THRESK. Yes.

PETTIFER. Now—and this is the important point

—what was the answer to that charge foreshadowed by the defence—during those five days before you appeared upon the scene?

THRESK. The defence had not formulated their answer. I came forward before the case for the Crown had finished.

PETTIFER. Quite so. But Mrs. Ballantyne's counsel did cross-examine the witnesses for the prosecution, and from that cross-examination it is quite clear what answer he was going to make. He was going—not to deny that Mrs. Ballantyne shot her husband—but to plead that she shot him in self-defence.

THRESK. Where do you find that?

(PETTIFER *opens out cuttings.*)

PETTIFER. Listen. (*Reads.*) Mr. Repton, Collector at Agra, testified that Ballantyne and his wife came up from the plains to the hill-station of Missourie in the hot weather and occupied a villa next to his. Repton's house was broken into one night. He went across to Ballantyne next morning, and in the presence of his wife advised him to sleep with a revolver under his pillow.

THRESK. Yes, I remember that.

PETTIFER. Mrs. Ballantyne then turned very pale, and, running after Repton down the garden like a distracted woman, cried, "Why did you tell him to do that? It will some night mean my death." This statement was elicited in cross-examination by Mrs. Ballantyne's counsel, and it could only mean that he intended to set up a plea of self-defence. I frankly find it a little difficult to reconcile that intention with the story you subsequently told.

THRESK. There are three things for you to remember, Mr. Pettifer. In the first place it is too early to assume that self-defence was going to be the plea.

In the second place, Mrs. Ballantyne was brought down to Bombay in a state of prostration. She was indifferent to anything which might happen.

PETTIFER. Yes, I can understand that.

THRESK. It followed that her advisers had to act upon their own initiative.

PETTIFER. And the third point?

THRESK. It's merely an opinion of mine, but a strong one—her counsel mishandled the case.

PETTIFER. Then I come to the next question. At the close of the case for the Crown, and the day before the defence was to be opened, you put yourself into communication with Mrs. Ballantyne's advisers and volunteered your evidence. Isn't it strange that the defence of its own accord never called you?

THRESK. It is not strange. For it was not known that I could throw any light upon the affair after all. All that passed between Ballantyne and myself, passed when we were alone.

PETTIFER. Yes. But you *had* dined with the Ballantynes on that night, you had only left the tent an hour before Ballantyne was found dead. Surely it's strange that since you were in Bombay Mrs. Ballantyne's advisers did not seek you out, did not ask you whether you could throw any light upon the crime.

THRESK. It would have been strange, but it was not *known* that I was in *Bombay*. On the contrary, I was supposed to be somewhere in the Red Sea on my way back to England.

PETTIFER (*surprised*). Oh! Let me understand that.

THRESK (*pulls chair a little nearer table*). I left the tent just before eleven to catch the Bombay mail. I was returning direct to England. The reason why Ballantyne asked me to take the photograph was, that since I was going from Bombay Station straight on board the boat, it could be no danger to me.

PETTIFER. Then why *didn't* you come back to England?

THRESK. I'll tell you. I thought the matter over on the journey down to Bombay. And I came to the conclusion that since the photograph might be wanted at Salak's trial, I had better take it to the Governor's house in Bombay. But Government House is out at Malabar Point, four miles from Bombay. I took it there and so I missed the boat. There wasn't another for a fortnight.

PETTIFER. Yes, I see. That makes a difference —a big difference. But during that fortnight Mrs. Ballantyne was brought down to Bombay.

THRESK. Yes.

PETTIFER. And the case for the Crown was stated.

THRESK. Yes.

PETTIFER. And the Crown's witnesses were cross-examined.

THRESK. Yes.

PETTIFER. Why did you wait then all that time before you came forward? Why did you wait till the day before Mrs. Ballantyne was going to be definitely committed to a particular line of defence, before you announced that you could clear up the mystery? Doesn't it rather look, Mr. Thresk, as if you had lain low on the chance of the Prosecution breaking down and had only come forward when you realized that to-morrow self-defence would be pleaded and a terrible risk would be run?

THRESK. But that's the truth, Mr. Pettifer.

PETTIFER. What?

THRESK (*calmly*). Consider my position—a barrister who was beginning to have one of the large practices, the Courts opening in London, briefs awaiting me, cases in which I had already advised coming on. The fortnight I lost by missing my boat was bad enough. But if I came forward with my story I must wait in Bombay not merely for a fortnight, but until the whole trial was completed and the

verdict given, as in the end I had to do. Of *course* I hoped that the Prosecution would break down. (*Ring bells.*) *Of course* I didn't intervene until it was absolutely necessary in the interest of justice that I should.

PETTIFER. I see. I see. Yes. That's not to be disputed.

THRESK (*rising*). Have you any more questions to ask me?

PETTIFER (*coming* L.C. *to* THRESK.) One. Did you know Mrs. Ballantyne before you went to Chitipur?

THRESK (*with his eyes on* PETTIFER). Yes.

PETTIFER. Had you seen her lately?

THRESK. No.

PETTIFER. When had you last seen her?

THRESK (HAZLEWOOD *rises, comes down* C.). Seven years before—here—at Little Beding. I had a cottage one summer. Her father and mother were alive. I had not seen her since. I had lost sight of her until I was in India. I did not know that she had married and was there.

(PETTIFER *throws up his hands with the gesture of a man who has done with the whole business.*)

HAZLEWOOD (*to* PETTIFER). Well?

PETTIFER. We have nothing to do but to thank Mr. Thresk for answering our questions and to apologize to him for having put them.

HAZLEWOOD. Certainly, and if apologies are needed——

THRESK. You are satisfied, then? (*To* HAZLEWOOD.)

PETTIFER. Yes. Let me say to you, Mr. Thresk, that ever since I began to study this case, I have wished less and less to bear hardly upon Mrs. Ballantyne. (HAZLEWOOD *goes* R. *and fills pipe.*) As I have read these columns the heavy figure of Stephen Ballantyne has taken life again, but a very sinister

life; and when I look at Stella, and think of what she went through during the six years of her married life, I cannot but feel a shiver of discomfort. Therefore, I am glad that my doubts are satisfied.

(*Enter* STELLA *and* DICK C.)

HAZLEWOOD. Yes, but—

PETTIFER. Hush! (*Warn Curtain.*)

STELLA. You have had your talk? (PETTIFER *goes up to* STELLA *above tea table.* DICK *goes* R. *to smoke table.* THRESK *joins them.*)

PETTIFER. Yes, but it's over. (STELLA *is surprised at the kindness of* PETTIFER'S *voice.*) Now tell me about your house.

(*He takes* STELLA *by the arm.*)

STELLA. You want to know?

PETTIFER. Yes, I do. Will it suit you?

STELLA. Yes, there's a high garden looking right across Calbourne Park.

HAZLEWOOD (*to* THRESK). Won't you have a cigarette now?

THRESK. No, thanks. I never smoke them.

STELLA. And there are a couple of bathrooms—that's splendid, isn't it?—and a delicious little drawing-room.

THRESK (*aiming his words at* STELLA). But since I see that I may, I think I will smoke a pipe.

(STELLA *stops.* THRESK *takes pipe from his pocket, and taps the bowl in the palm of his hand.* STELLA *turns slowly and looks at it in alarm and fear. Comes down* R. *of tea table.* PETTIFER *comes to tea table, collects papers, tears notes up, his back to* STELLA. DICK *and* HAZLEWOOD *talking together* R.)

DICK. You smoke a pipe, do you?

THRESK. Ah! You didn't know that.

DICK. No.

THRESK. I am lost without my pipe. Before now when I have left it behind me, I have come back for it, under all sorts of circumstances, even at the risk of losing a train. But he didn't know that, Mrs. Ballantyne.

STELLA. No.

THRESK. No. He didn't know that. (THRESK *crosses* R., *saying*), May I have some tobacco? DICK *hands him tobacco jar, he starts to fill pipe.* STELLA *turns to* PETTIFER.)

CURTAIN ON LAST WORD.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR ACT III.

On Stage.

Lamp on small table L., *lit.*
Brief, papers and blue pencil, on tea table L.
Keys in doors R. and L.
Candles (2), matches, whisky, syphon, 2 glasses, on table up R.
Notepaper, loose sheets, envelopes, pens, on table C.
Ash tray on table C.
Candles on table C., *out.*
Lamp up R., *lit.*
Lamp up L. *struck.*
Curtains and windows all closed.
Glass off C., for tapping

Hand Props.

Pipe, letter—Thresk.

Plays 30 minutes.

ACT III.

Scene. The Library.

THRESK *is sitting on couch* L. *with some legal papers, smoking a pipe,* HAZLEWOOD *standing above him.*

THRESK. You won't mind if I sit up for a little? I have got to read these papers, and if I tried to do it in bed I should fall asleep in a minute.

HAZLEWOOD. Sit up, by all means. You will put the lights out, won't you?

THRESK. Certainly.

HAZLEWOOD. You really must catch the 8.45 in the morning?

THRESK. Yes, indeed. I have to be in Court at half-past ten.

HAZLEWOOD. Very well. I think I'll go to bed. Dick will be back in a minute, but you must send him away.

THRESK. I will.

(HAZLEWOOD *looks at* THRESK, *who is engrossed in his brief, goes a little* R., *then back.*)

HAZLEWOOD. He has gone to see Mrs. Ballantyne home.

THRESK. Under the circumstances a natural thing to do.

HAZLEWOOD. Yes, I suppose so. Well, good-night.

THRESK. Good-night.

HAZLEWOOD. Yes . . . Well . . . good-night! (*Enter* DICK, L.) Ah, Richard! lock that door, will you. (DICK *locks door*, L.) Well, good-night.

DICK. I'll come up in a minute.

HAZLEWOOD. You mustn't stay up. Mr. Thresk has some briefs to read.

(*Exit* HAZLEWOOD R.)

DICK. I'm not going to interrupt you, Mr. Thresk (DICK *goes up* L., *then to table up* R., *mixes whisky and soda, comes down* R., *then to* R. *of tea table, talking all the time.*) But I must thank you again. I can't tell you what I owe to you. (THRESK *grunts. He is marking his brief with great slashes made in the margin with a blue pencil. Here and there he underlines a sentence.*) It would be impossible for me to make you understand how much happiness I get from seeing the haggard look of misery fade out of Stella's face and some sparkle of laughter return to her eyes. (THRESK, *turning over page of brief, grunts.*) I couldn't talk like this to any one else. But you are so sympathetic.

THRESK. There's nothing like a lover. He'll find a kindly audience in a log of wood and sing his lady's praises to a toadstool.

DICK (*sits* R. *of tea table*). Well, she's pretty wonderful, isn't she? Honestly now, isn't she? I feel coarse beside her, I tell you. (*Drinks, puts glass on table.*) I'm thirty years old.

THRESK. From your style of conversation I find that difficult to believe.

DICK. I've wasted thirty years before I met her. (*Leaning back in his chair.*) Just jogging along with the world a miracle about one, and not half an eye to perceive it. You know.

THRESK. I don't.

DICK. Did you have a talk with her to-night? (THRESK *goes on reading.*) No, you didn't. I wish

you had. My father didn't give you a chance. She noticed it. She said she would have liked to have had a talk with you, and hoped you could come and call on her to-morrow.

THRESK. Impossible.

DICK. I told her you were leaving early.

THRESK. Where does she live?

DICK. Across the meadow over there. At a little cottage called "By-Lanes."

(THRESK *writes address down on top of his brief, but as if he were making a note.*)

THRESK. "By-Lanes." Queer name!

DICK. Yes. (THRESK *goes on reading.*) (*Enthusiastically.*) Did you ever see a woman look so well in a grey frock? Or in a white one either? There's a soft blue shimmering thing she wears too! (*Pauses, looks at* THRESK, *who is taking no notice.*) Oh, well, perhaps I had better go to bed.

THRESK. I think it would be wise.

(*Rises, takes glass, goes up* R., *puts glass on table, lights candle, comes down* R., *stops, looks at* THRESK, *comes across* L.)

DICK. You're awfully sympathetic, you know. (*Puts candle down on tea table, draws chair close to* THRESK, *sits.*) Why don't you get married? You ought to, you know. It's a great mistake not to. (THRESK *picks up* DICK'S *candle and gives it to him.* DICK *takes it but doesn't rise yet.*) Men run to seed so if they don't.

THRESK. *Are* you going to bed?

DICK. Yes, I am. Good night.

(DICK *goes* R. *As he reaches door, turns.*)

DICK. I say, did you ever see Stella in a riding habit?

THRESK. Go to bed. (DICK *exits hurriedly* R. *with candle, closes door.*)

(*As soon as* THRESK *is alone his air of indifference changes to distress. He stands for a moment in doubt. Then he shrugs his shoulders, collects papers, pencil and red tape, takes them over and puts them* L. *of* C. *table, turns on candles, puts pipe in ash tray, sits and starts to write. Taps on window at third line of letter, at finish of letter, as* THRESK *rises.*)

THRESK. By-Lanes. (*He writes. A gentle tapping is heard at big bow window behind the curtains.* THRESK *does not notice it. It is repeated louder.* THRESK *looks up. It is repeated still louder.* THRESK *rises, draws curtains aside and looks out. With a whispered exclamation he opens the window.* STELLA *passes quickly in.* THRESK *closes the window.*) You! You are mad.

(THRESK *goes* R. *and locks doors, then* R. *of table* C. STELLA *puts wrap on upper arm of settee* L., *then comes* C. *She does not speak until* THRESK *has come* R. *of table.*)

STELLA. I had to see you alone. I was told you would be sitting up late here. Dick told me.

THRESK. There was no need to come: I was writing to you. (*Goes above table, gets letter, comes round* L. *of settee* C.)

STELLA. Yes. I was sure of it. That's why I had to come.

THRESK. You were sure, too, of what I was writing.

STELLA. Yes.

THRESK. How were you sure?

STELLA. This afternoon—you interrupted me whilst I was speaking of the house we were going to take. You stood tapping the bowl of your pipe in your hand. I understood.

THRESK. Well, I have written it.

(*Offers letter.*)

STELLA. No, I won't read it—not a word of it. (*Kneels left knee on settee.*) It has never been written. I came in time to prevent its being written. You only had an idea of writing and thought better of it. Say that! You are my friend. It has been never written at all.

THRESK. It has. I am sorry. (STELLA *sits* C. *of settee.*) I saw you this afternoon as you used to be before troubles and sorrows had caught you and marked you. To-night I see the stricken woman of the tent in Chitipur. I am very sorry.

STELLA. I knew you would be. You are not hard. You can't be. You must come close, day by day, in your life to so much that is pitiful. One can talk to you and you'll understand. This is my first chance, the first real chance I've ever had, the very first.

THRESK. I know. But I don't ask you to give it up. I only ask you to tell your lover the truth. For unless you tell him now, you never will, and all your life you'll live in fear. Tell him the truth.

STELLA (*defiantly*). He knows it.

THRESK. No.

STELLA. He does! He does!

THRESK. Hush!

STELLA. We are safe here. No one sleeps on this side of the house.

THRESK. You sent me this note as soon as you discovered I was here. (*He takes note from his pocket.*) If he knows the truth, why did you write it?

STELLA. I said why. They were setting a trap.

THRESK. If your lover knows the truth, why should you fear a trap? If he knows the truth, why are you here now? (*Pulls chair* R. *of tea table forward. Sits.*)

STELLA. Because—I told you—this afternoon—you seemed to be threatening me. That was all I

had in my mind. You stood knocking the pipe in your hand. It seemed a sort—of—threat.

THRESK. Why, if he knows the truth, should I be threatening you ?

STELLA. You—confuse me. It's so easy for you to do it—to make me look guilty. That's what you are trained to do. I came here because I thought you wanted to prevent my marriage.

THRESK. Why, if he knows the truth, should I wish to prevent the marriage ? I left my pipe behind me in the tent on the night I dined with you. He doesn't know that. I came back to fetch it. He doesn't know that. You were standing at the table with the rifle in your hand. That's what your lover doesn't know. That's what I recalled to you this afternoon. That's what I meant to recall.

STELLA. Did you ? Of course—I was getting the rifle ready for the next day. I told you so, I think, at the time.

THRESK. Suppose that at Bombay, at the time, I had told the Court how I had returned ?—how I had found you with the rifle in your hands !

STELLA. But you didn't. Of course you didn't. Why should you, since that had nothing at all to do with what happened. We know what happened.

THRESK. Yes. You and I know.

STELLA. Yes. And Dick. And all the world. There was a thief who tried to steal. (*Looking straight in front of her.*)

THRESK. Oh ! (*Rise, away* L. *a little.*)

STELLA. He pushed an arm under the tent wall —a lean brown arm, with a hand delicate as a woman's.

THRESK. There was no thief. There was a man delirious with drink. There was you with the bruises on your throat and the unutterable misery in your eyes, and a rifle in your hands. There was no one else. Come, Stella, (*Up to* STELLA.) you must tell him ; or make an excuse and break off your engagement.

STELLA. And after you have been here ? It would be a confession !

THRESK. Confess, then !

STELLA. I have nothing to confess.

THRESK. Then I have.

STELLA. You ! What have you to tell ? That you left the camp to catch your train—that—he—saw you off at the edge of the camp—and that's all.

THRESK. Oh, much more ! That I lied at the trial. (STELLA *rises.*) That's what I have to say. That the story which secured your acquittal was false. That I made it up to save you. That I told it again this afternoon to give you a chance of slipping out from an impossible position—a chance you refused to take.

STELLA. You are trying to frighten me. (*Backs a little.*)

THRESK. I ?

STELLA. You almost did. You would have, if I didn't know you.

THRESK. Does anybody know anybody ?

STELLA. Do you realize what it would mean to you if it were ever really known that you had lied at the trial ?

THRESK. Yes.

STELLA. Your ruin. Your absolute ruin.

THRESK. Worse than that.

STELLA. Prison ?

THRESK. Yes.

STELLA. And you would run the risk of the truth becoming known by telling it to so much as one person. (*Goes down* R.) No, no ! Another, perhaps —not you ! (*Turns up to* R. *of table* C.) You have had one dream all your life—to rise out of obscurity, to get on in the world, to become famous, to hold the high positions. You have lain down late and risen early ; and you've got on. Well, are you the man to throw away all this work, all this success, now that they touch fulfilment ? You are on the chariot.

Will *you* step down from it and run tied to the wheels? Will you stand up and say before the world, "There was a trial. I perjured myself." No! Another, perhaps. Not you. Not you. (*Sits* R. *of table* C.)

THRESK (*goes up to above table* C.). You are not very generous, Stella. For if I lied, I saved you by the lie.

STELLA. I know. I am not ungrateful. I sent you a little word of thanks when you gave me my freedom. But it won't be of very much value to me if I lose—what I am fighting for now.

THRESK. So you use every weapon?

STELLA. Yes.

THRESK. But this one breaks in your hand. The thing you think it incredible that I should do, I shall do none the less.

STELLA. You save me one day to destroy me the next.

THRESK (*sits*). No. I had no wish to stir the mud in this pool up again. Had I known why Hazlewood wanted me I should have refused to come. But I *am* here. The trouble's once more at my door, but in a new shape. There's this young man, young Hazlewood, I can't forget him. You will be marrying him by the help of a lie I told. (*Movement from* STELLA.) Oh! I have never felt any remorse for the lie I told—never a twinge, I should tell it again to-morrow were the trial to-morrow and you a prisoner. But when you use the lie to marry a man and keep him in ignorance of the truth, why then I am bound to say no. And for your sake, too! Make no mistake. Pettifer was near to the truth to-day; I've turned him away from it. Yes, but another may be near the truth to-morrow, and he may reach it. Suppose it comes out, is brought to your husband? (*Rises, comes down* L., *puts chair back to* R. *of tea table.*) I don't lay claim to any fine principles. I simply say I have got it in my bones that since you won't, I must tell the truth now, as I once told the lie.

STELLA (*rising*). Very well. You must know the whole truth then. Now you only guess at it.

THRESK. Tell it me.

STELLA. I will; I meant to kill myself. (R. *of settee* C.)

THRESK. Good God! It had come to that? (*Sits* L. *of settee* C.)

STELLA. Yes. And you had your share in bringing it to that.

THRESK. I?

STELLA. You sit here in judgment. But you must shoulder your portion of the blame. I am not alone. I am not alone!

THRESK. I am ready to shoulder it.

STELLA (*sits on settee* R. *of* THRESK). We were to have been married once—you and I—nine years ago. But we were both poor, and poverty and a wife together would have hampered you too much. So I was sacrificed. (*Puts her* L. *hand on* THRESK'S R. *shoulder.*) And you cared for me too. It hurt you to let me go. It really hurt you very much. Oh, don't I remember our *reasonable* talks? The hindrance marriage was, and "he travels fastest who travels alone" and a rich husband was waiting somewhere for me. Up on the downs there on summer days with the sky above us, and both of us young, we talked that sound, level, abominable common sense. For I pretended to agree with you—with a smile upon my face—what else could I do?—while all my soul screamed out against us both as traitors. For I loved too—but with what an aching heart. Well, we parted—you to your work of getting on, Harry, I to think of you getting on without me at your side! Some friends took me out to India. I was a young girl, lonely and very unhappy, and as young girls often do, who are lonely and very unhappy, I drifted into marriage. Then I was beaten—despised—ridiculed. For six years that lasted. And it might have gone on, had not one little thing happened to push me over the precipice.

THRESK. What was that?

STELLA. *Your* visit to me at Chitipur. *Why* did you come? (*Movement from* THRESK *as if he is about to explain; she stops him.*) Oh, but I know! Yes. You came because of that one weak soft spot of sentimentalism there is in all of you, the strongest, the hardest. You heard of me in Bombay, and it came over you that you would like to see how the woman you had loved looked after all these years: whether she retained her pretty ways, whether she missed you. You wanted to fan up into a mild, harmless flame the ashes of an old romance—warm your hands at if for half an hour, recapture a savour of dim and pleasant memories (*Rises, goes a little* R.) and then go back to your own place and your own work, untouched and unhurt.

THRESK. And that's why I came to Chitipur?

STELLA. Yes. (*Up to* R. *of settee* C.) But I couldn't be left untouched and unhurt. You came, and all that I had lost came with you, came in a vivid rush of bright, intolerable memories—summers here, women friends, dainty and comfortable things, and days of great happiness, when it was so good to be alive and young. And *you* were going back to it all—straight by the night mail to Bombay, straight from the station on board your ship. Oh, how it hurt to hear you speak of it. I couldn't endure it! The blows, the ridicule, the contempt—I determined should come to an end that night, and when you saw me with the rifle in my hands, I was going to end it.

THRESK. And then?

STELLA. And then the stupidest thing happened. I couldn't find the box of cartridges. I got nervous and flurried. And it had all to be over and done with before *he* came back. And I couldn't find the cartridges. I heard you say good night—the last words I wanted to hear from any one—and then I did find them, appropriately enough, on the table where the

whisky stood. I hurried, but just as I was pushing one of them into the breach of the rifle he stood in the doorway.

THRESK. Yes, yes!

STELLA. He swore at me. He asked me roughly why I didn't shoot myself and rid him of a fool. I stood without answering him. That always maddened him. I didn't do it on purpose. I had become dull and slow; and in a fury he ran at me with his fist raised. I recoiled—he frightened me—and then, before he reached me—yes! I remember that he stood and stared at me stupidly for a second. I had just time to believe that nothing had happened and to be glad, and to be terrified of what he would do to me. And then he fell and lay quite still.

THRESK. And you? What did you do?

STELLA. I said I would tell you all the truth. I think that I was numbed. I went to bed. Does that sound very horrible to you? (*Goes down a little to below armchair* R.) I had one clear thought only—that it was all over. I slept. (*Sits.*) Yes, that's the truth. I did actually sleep. (*Her head falls back, worn out, and she closes her eyes; pause.* THRESK *rises, goes to her and touches her on the* L. *arm.*)

THRESK. Stella!

STELLA (*she takes hold of the lapels of his coat*). Now answer me truly. If you still loved me, would you, knowing this story, refuse to marry me?

THRESK. No. I should not.

STELLA. Then why shouldn't Dick marry me?

THRESK. Because he doesn't know this story. (*Goes* C.)

STELLA (*rises*). Yes, yes. There's the flaw in my appeal to you. I know. You are quite right. I should have told (*Takes handkerchief from her bodice.*) him. I should tell him now. But I daren't—not yet. I have tried to—oh, more than once. Believe that, Harry! (THRESK *up to settee.*) You must believe it. But I couldn't. I hadn't the courage. You will

give me a little time, won't you? Oh, not long. (STELLA *kneels.* THRESK *sits* C.) I will tell him—of my own free will—very soon, Harry. But not now. I can't! I can't! I can't! (*Her* L. *arm on* THRESK'S *knee. She sobs; pause.*)

THRESK (*trys to soothe her, strokes her hair*). There's another way. You have said a good many hard things to me, Stella—some true, some untrue. And the untrue things you wouldn't have said, if you had stopped to ask yourself one question.

STELLA. What question?

THRESK. Why I missed my steamer at Bombay.

STELLA. You missed it on purpose? (*Looking up to* THRESK'S *face.*)

THRESK. Yes. I didn't come to Chitipur on any sentimental journey. I asked after you in Bombay. I was told that you were married. It was hinted to me that you were illtreated. I came to find out for myself, and if the report was true, to take you away.

STELLA. You?

THRESK. Yes, I!

STELLA. To take me back with you to England?

THRESK. Yes!

STELLA. Out of pity? (*Kneels back a little.*)

THRESK. No, not out of pity. I wanted you.

STELLA. You wanted me? Oh, why couldn't you have told me on that night? Just to know that you really wanted me—what a difference that would have made.

THRESK (*rises, goes* L.). I had not five minutes with you alone.

STELLA. Oh, if I had known! If I had known! (*Rising.*)

THRESK. I thought I would get a chance to let you know. I left my pipe behind.

STELLA. To come back and tell me?

THRESK. Yes; but he was close upon my heels. I could say nothing except that I would write to you from Bombay. You had the rifle in your hand.

Oh, my God, if I had dreamed of what was in your mind!

STELLA. You couldn't have suspected.

THRESK. I thought I should be leaving you with him just for four days—just the time for a letter to reach you and for you to slip out one morning when you were free and travel down to Bombay.

STELLA. And before you could write——

THRESK. The news came. I was lunching with a friend at the Club. I was going to write that night. The boat was already steaming through the harbour. And then over the tape the news came.

STELLA. Thank you. (*Touches* THRESK'S *arm.*) You would have ruined yourself for me. For i would have meant your ruin.

THRESK. Ruin's a large word.

STELLA. But afterwards? After the trial? I never heard from you!

THRESK. You disappeared. I asked your solicitors for your address. They refused it. I tried to find you. I never did.

STELLA. Yes. I gave orders. (*Crosses* L. *to below table* L.) I never thought that you would want to see me. I imagined you had come forward just for the sake of old memories.

THRESK. No.

STELLA. Why have you told me this? (*Up to* THRESK.)

THRESK. I want to prepare you. There's a way out of this trouble—the honest way for both of us. (*His hands on her arms.*) To make a clean breast of it together, and together—take what follows.

STELLA. No, no. (*Turns, goes and sits on settee* L.)

THRESK. I won't leave you to stand alone—you can't be tried again. That's sure. You've been acquitted.

STELLA. But you?

THRESK (*chair* R. *of tea table*). Yes. Well—I

take the consequences. I doubt if they'd be so very heavy. There'd be a certain amount of sympathy. And afterwards—it would be as though (*Sits, and takes hold of* STELLA'S *hand, which is on the table.*) you had slipped down to Bombay and joined me—we can make the best of our lives together.

STELLA. No, no. That's your ruin. You put me to shame. (*Buries her head on top arm of settee.*)

THRESK. You give up your struggle for a footing in the world—that's what you want, isn't it? I give up my success. We'll make something of our lives, never fear! (*Rise above* STELLA.) But to marry this man for his position and he not knowing—Oh, my dear, I know how you're driven. But it won't do! It won't do! (*Hand on her head. Long pause.*)

STELLA (*holding* THRESK'S *hand*). I must tell you something which I had meant to hide from you. The last little thing which I've kept back. It will hurt you, I am afraid. (*Turns her head away from* THRESK.) It isn't because of his position that I cling to Dick. I want him to keep that—yes—for his sake. I don't want him to lose by marrying me more than he needs must.

THRESK. You care for him then? You really care for him?

STELLA. So much that if I lost him now, I should lose all the world. (THRESK *goes* L.C. STELLA *waits till he stops, to go on speaking.*) You and I can't go back to where we stood nine years ago. You had your chance then, Harry, if you had wished to take it. But you didn't wish it; and that sort of chance doesn't often come again. Other chances—like it—yes. But not quite the same one. I am sorry. But you must believe me. If I lost Dick, I should lose all the world. That is my one poor excuse.

THRESK. Excuse?

STELLA. Yes. I meant Dick to marry me publicly. (*Rise.*) But I saw that his father shrank from the

marriage. I grew afraid. I t ld Dick of my fears. He banished them—I let him b n sh them.

THRESK. What do you mean ?

STELLA. We were married privately in London a week ago.

THRESK. Oh ! Oh ! (*Goes* R.C. STELLA *follows.*)

STELLA. Oh, I know that it was wrong. But I was being hunted. They were all like a pack of wolves after me. Dick's father had joined them. I was driven into a corner. I loved Dick. They meant to tear me from him without any pity. I clung. Yes, I clung.

THRESK. You tricked him.

STELLA. I didn't dare to tell him. I didn't dare to ose him.

(*Ring bells.*)

THRESK. You tricked him.

STELLA. You accuse me. You condemn me.

THRESK. Yes, yes. A thousand times, yes.

STELLA (*strong*). Because I tricked him, or because I married him ?

THRESK. Yes, there's truth in the distinction. It's because you married him.

STELLA. But I'll tell him now, Harry. I'll tell him now.

THRESK. What's the use ? You give him no choice. You can't set him free.

STELLA. Oh yes I can—and I will, I promise you, if he wishes it. I can set him free quite easily, quite naturally. Any woman could. So many of us take things to make us sleep.

THRESK. Good God ! you mustn't think of it ! (*Takes* STELLA *by the arms.*)

(*A rattling at door* R. *Both look at one another.* THRESK *goes* R. *Knock at door.* THRESK *points to window, motioning to* STELLA *to hide. She shakes her head.*)

HAZLEWOOD. Are you there, Thresk?

STELLA. Let him in!

(THRESK *opens the door, come back* R.C.)

(*Enter* HAZLEWOOD R.; *shuts door.*)

HAZLEWOOD (*below arm-chair* R.). I came down because I thought that I heard—(*He sees* STELLA.) You here—at this hour—with him. You were persuading him to hold his tongue.

STELLA. No. He was persuading me to tell the truth. And he has succeeded.

HAZLEWOOD. You confess?

THRESK. It's not so bad as you hope for, Mr. Hazlewood.

HAZLEWOOD. Richard must be told.

STELLA. Yes. I claim the right to tell him.

HAZLEWOOD. I refuse the claim. I shall go straight to him now. (*Moving* R.)

STELLA. Take care, Mr. Hazlewood! After you have told him, he will come straight to me. Take care! Take care!

THRESK. Yes. Let Mrs. Ballantyne tell him!

HAZLEWOOD. But will she?

STELLA. You shall hear me. To-morrow morning. I'll tell him here. And if he wishes it, I'll set him free and never trouble either of you again. (*Goes up and gets wrap.*)

(*Warn curtain.*)

(THRESK *comes to* HAZLEWOOD.)

HAZLEWOOD. Will she?

THRESK. God help her, yes. (HAZLEWOOD *exits*; *shuts door.*) I'll see you home.

STELLA. No, please! (*Comes* L.C.) I'd rather go alone. Be here when I tell him. Will you? Oh, I shall so want a friend.

THRESK. Yes. I will be here.

STELLA. What will Dick say?—at his first words we shall know.

THRESK. Yes. At his first words.

STELLA. No warning to him! Not a hint! I must know the truth, the inmost truth of him. Promise me; or to-night I——

THRESK. No!

STELLA. I must know what he thinks and what he feels.

THRESK. I promise.

STELLA. I tricked him. You spoke the truth. I let him marry me, not knowing. Will he forgive. (*She comes up to* THRESK.) You would!

THRESK. Yes. But——

STELLA. Well!

THRESK. I am not so young as he.

STELLA. Oh, Harry! (*She goes up to* L. *of table* C., *holds out her left hand.*) Good night! (THRESK *goes up, takes her hand.*

THRESK. Good night. (*As they are going up* L.C.)

CURTAIN ON LAST WORD.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR ACT IV

Stage.	Hand Props.
Morning Post on R. of table C.	Bag off L.U., Dick.
11 letters and salver on L. of table C.	
Parcel on small table L.	
All curtains open, windows open.	
Door L. unlatched.	

Plays 18 *minutes.*

ACT IV

Scene. The Library. Next morning.

As curtain rises HAZLEWOOD, *seated at writing-table* C, *is counting over the letters which he has written.* HUBBARD L, *stands beside him with a salver.*

HAZLEWOOD. Nine, ten, eleven. That's all. (*He places letters on the salver and leans back.*) There must be an answer to the problem, Hubbard?

HUBBARD. No doubt, sir!

HAZLEWOOD. But as far as you are concerned, you can throw no light upon it.

HUBBARD. Not a glimmer, sir.

HAZLEWOOD. That is unlike you, Hubbard. For sometimes after I have been deliberating for days over some curious and perplexing conundrum, you have solved it the moment it has been put to you.

HUBBARD. It is very good of you, sir.

HAZLEWOOD. Yet you are not clever, Hubbard?

HUBBARD. No, sir.

HAZLEWOOD. Not at all clever, Hubbard?

HUBBARD. No, sir; I know my place.

HAZLEWOOD. You must have some wonderful gift of insight which guides you straight to the inner meaning of things?

HUBBARD. It's just common sense, sir, that's all.

HAZLEWOOD. But I haven't got it, Hubbard.

HUBBARD. You don't need it, sir. You're a gentleman. Are these all the letters, sir?

HAZLEWOOD. Yes, Hubbard.

HUBBARD (*as he goes towards the door sees bundle of pamphlets on table*). I beg your pardon, sir, but shall I unpack this parcel?

HAZLEWOOD. What parcel, Hubbard?

HUBBARD. Another 1,000 copies of your *Prison Walls*, sir.

HAZLEWOOD. Well—er—no, Hubbard, no. I am not sure that that parcel is not what we might almost call one of my mistakes.

HUBBARD. I am sorry to hear that, sir.

HAZLEWOOD. I think you shall burn it, Hubbard.

HUBBARD. Certainly, sir.

HAZLEWOOD. I should burn it at once, Hubbard—somewhere where it won't be noticed.

HUBBARD. Yes, sir, I'll burn it under the shadow of the south wall.

(*Enter* THRESK, R.)

(*Exit* HUBBARD, L., *with parcel and letters on salver.*)

HAZLEWOOD. Ah, Mr. Thresk! (*Rises, comes* C.) You have had breakfast?

THRESK. Thank you. I am rather late I'm afraid.

HAZLEWOOD. I am glad, if it means that you slept well.

THRESK. I can't say that I did that. Yesterday I interfered. (*Sits* R.).

HAZLEWOOD. I hope you don't regret that you did that.

THRESK. I do. For from that interference irrevocable things may follow which I would give a world to hinder if I could, and I can do nothing.

HAZLEWOOD. There are laws one cannot tamper with, laws born in the blood of each natural man.

THRESK. Is that the voice of Mr. Hazlewood?

HAZLEWOOD. Oh, I cannot argue the point. I am relieved this morning from a strain of suspense. (*Sits*

c.) To have refused my consent to Richard's marriage with Stella Ballantyne on no other grounds than that social prejudice forbade it, would have seemed a complete reversal of my whole theory and conduct of life. I should have become an object of ridicule. People would have laughed. I have heard their laughter all this month. Now, however, once the truth is known, no one can say——

THRESK. Mr. Hazlewood ?

HAZLEWOOD. Well !

THRESK. Do you mean to say that if after Mrs. Ballantyne's story is told, her relations with your son come to an end, you mean to make that story public ?

HAZLEWOOD. Of course.

THRESK. You mean to publish why Dick doesn't marry her ?

HAZLEWOOD. Certainly.

THRESK. You can't be thinking of it.

HAZLEWOOD. But I am. I must do it. There is so much at stake.

THRESK. What ?

HAZLEWOOD. The whole consistency of my life. I must make it clear that I am not acting upon prejudice or suspicion or fear of what the world will say, or any of the conventional reasons which might guide other men.

THRESK (*rises*). So for the sake of your reputation for consistency you will make a very unhappy woman bear obloquy and shame which she might easily be spared.

HAZLEWOOD. You put the case very harshly. I have no wish to be cruel. But you must really consider my point of view.

THRESK. I do ; and on consideration I think it's horrible—horrible in its vanity.

(HUBBARD *enters* L. *and announces* " Mrs. Pettifer.")

HAZLEWOOD. Half-past ten, too ! We must get rid of her.

(*Exit* HUBBARD L.).

Enter Mrs. PETTIFER, L. ; *comes* L.C.)

Mrs. PETTIFER. I have only come in for a moment, Harold. I have something to say to you.

HAZLEWOOD (*rises, comes to* Mrs. PETTIFER, *smiling*). Say it, Margaret. You cannot annoy me this morning. I am myself again. (THRESK *gets paper ; goes and sits in window*). The brain, the sedulous active brain, resumes its work to-day asking questions, probing problems. I rose early, Margaret, and walking in the fields amongst the cows before breakfast a most curious speculation flashed into my mind. Hubbard cannot answer it, neither can I. How is it, I asked myself——

(*Call* STELLA.)

Mrs. PETTIFER. Harold ! Stop talking and listen to me. (*Sits* R. *of tea table*). They have taken St. Quentin's I hear.

HAZLEWOOD. Who ?

Mrs. PETTIFER. Dick and Stella Ballantyne.

HAZLEWOOD. Nothing of the sort ! They went to look at St. Quentin's. A very different thing.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Well it will be St. Quentin's or some other house in Little Beding. And—to put it plainly—I withdraw my opposition to the marriage.

HAZLEWOOD. You, Margaret ! You of all people ! Why ?

Mrs. PETTIFER. First of all Robert came home yesterday afternoon from his interview with Mr. Thresk absolutely satisfied. And Robert's judgment I have found to be generally sound. In the second place, I propose to go on living at Little Beding and I don't (*Enter* DICK, L.C., *comes down* L.) think that it would be very comfortable to go on living here with Dick and Dick's wife as strangers. So I give in. I am going to *call* on Stella Ballantyne this afternoon.

DICK. Thank you ! Aunt Margaret ! You will

be very welcome. I knew you were all right, really you know. Put on a few frills at first, but all women do that.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Dick!

DICK (*sees* THRESK). Hulloa! Good morning. (*Goes* R. THRESK *goes down to join him*). I thought you were going to catch the 8.45.

THRESK. I was lazy. I shall go up later in the morning. I have asked Hubbard to look me up a train.

DICK. I suppose fellows'll go to quod right and left this morning because you aren't there to defend them.

THRESK (R. *of table* C.). I am not practising in the Police Courts to-day.

HAZLEWOOD. Did you ride this morning, Dick?

DICK. No. Stella sent word over that she was tired. I must trot across the meadow and see how she is.

HAZLEWOOD (C.). Oh, she is coming here this morning.

DICK. Is she? She didn't say so to me, and I was the last to see her yesterday evening. Did you ask her to come?

HAZLEWOOD. Oh no, she's coming of her own accord.

DICK. Sent word over, eh? Stella tired. Mr. Thresk lazy—our little dinner party seems to have knocked you all out, doesn't it?

HAZLEWOOD. Not me, Richard! I walked out in the fields—oh yes, and a most curious problem presented itself to my mind. Hubbard quite failed to throw any light upon it. I myself am, I confess, bewildered. And I wonder if a fresh young mind can help us to a solution.

DICK (*sits on settee* C.). The fresh young mind will have a go at it. Fire away, father.

HAZLEWOOD. How is it, I asked myself——

DICK. That's your old style.

HAZLEWOOD (*to* THRESK). Exactly. How is it

that with all the progress of civilization and the advancement of science a cow gives no more milk to-day than she did at the beginning of the Christian Era?

DICK. A fresh young mind can answer that question in two shakes. It is because the laws of nature forbid. That's your trouble, father. That's the great drawback to sentimental enthusiasm. It's always up against the laws of nature.

Mrs. PETTIFER (*rise*). Dick, every now and then you talk common sense.

DICK. Yes—I get it from Hubbard.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Good-bye!

HAZLEWOOD. You are going, Margaret? Well—will you come back and lunch? I *think* that I should like to see you at lunch time.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Yes, I can manage that. But won't this afternoon do? I will come to you after I have paid my call.

HAZLEWOOD. No! Come before! I mean come to luncheon.

Mrs. PETTIFER. Very well. Good-bye, Mr. Thresk. We have not been introduced. But Harold always was impossible.

(*Exit* Mrs. PETTIFER, L., *followed by* HAZLEWOOD, *who bustles her off. He closes door.*)

DICK. There seems to me to be another problem waiting for a fresh young mind to solve. (*Rises, going* L.C.)

THRESK. I think you told me yesterday that you were thirty. (*Coming* L.C.)

DICK. Yes. I am coming to that alarming point when (*Sits* R. *of tea table.*) cricket ends and golf begins.

THRESK. Thirty's a good age. (*Sits on* L. *arm of settee* C.)

DICK. It looks back on youth.

THRESK. I should be glad to be sure that it did.

DICK. Why?

THRESK. Youth is a graceful thing, of high-sounding words and impetuous thoughts, but like many other graceful things it can be mighty hard and mighty cruel.

DICK. It is supposed to be generous.

THRESK. And it is—to itself. Generous where its sympathies are enlisted, generous so long as all goes well with it; generous because it is confident of triumph, certain of success. But its generosity is not a matter of judgment, it does not come from any outlook upon a world where there is a good deal to be said for everything. It is a matter of physical health. And once affronted, once hurt, youth finds it difficult to forgive.

DICK. And why do you say this to me? (*Rises, backs a little.*)

THRESK (*puts his left hand on* DICK'S R. *shoulder*). Yes, it is rather an impertinence, isn't it? But I was looking into a case late last night where irrevocable things are going to happen if youth will not forgive.

DICK. I don't think it's an impertinence. But——

(STELLA *appears* L.U. *Stays outside window.*)

THRESK. Well?

DICK. There's Stella coming across the lawn. (*Up* L.C. *Turns.*) Your case has not yet come on?

THRESK. Oh no, I shall be in time for that.

(*Exit* DICK. *Talks to* STELLA *in window.*)

(*Enter* HUBBARD, L.)

HUBBARD. There's a train to London, sir, at twelve.

THRESK. Thank you. I will try to catch it.

HUBBARD. You must leave here, sir, by a quarter to.

THRESK (DICK *goes off* L.U.). Thanks! Can you send me to the station?

HUBBARD. Yes, sir, certainly.

(*Exit* HUBBARD, L.)

(STELLA *comes in alone,* L.C.)

THRESK (C.). Good morning! I am sorry. You have had a troublesome night to get through, I'm afraid. What has become of Dick?

STELLA (L.C.). I sent him to my house to fetch my bag for me. I wanted to speak to you for a moment alone. (*Sits* R. *of tea table.*)

THRESK. Yes.

STELLA (L.C.). You have not warned Dick of what I am going to say to him?

THRESK. No. How could I, unless I told him what it is left for you to tell.

STELLA. You are sure, quite, quite sure? You haven't uttered one word which might persuade Dick to say to himself this morning, "If I show the repulsion which I feel, she will take her life"?

THRESK. No. Not a word to suggest that you would do that. (STELLA *puts her gloves on tea table.*)

STELLA. Thank you! Thank you! I shall be listening for—his first words, before he has calculated, before he has reasoned. It would never do for Dick to sacrifice himself, just because he suspected that unless he did I should not go on living. No, that would never do. I should be certain to find it out; and then the—remedy—would only have been needlessly delayed.

THRESK. Stella, you mustn't take that remedy. It's too big a price—the price you mean to pay.

STELLA. It's no price at all, my friend. You hear it said that a woman will do anything to keep the man she loves. She'll do a good deal—most things if you like. But sometimes love runs still a little stronger. And then it craves only that the loved one shall get all he wants to have. If Dick wants his freedom, I too want that he should have it—the price doesn't count.

THRESK. Stella, that mustn't be. I have lain awake all night with one thought gathering strength in my mind, a thought terrible to me. I blundered at Bombay two years ago and the price of that blunder may be your life to-day. (*Goes* R.C.)

STELLA. You blundered! You were a good friend to me, Harry. (*Holds out her* R. *hand.* THRESK *takes it.*)

THRESK. I meant to be, but I was not. I should never have come forward; I should never have told my story in the witness-box. I should have let your counsel develop his case on the line he had chosen, the line of self-defence. You would have been acquitted, and rightly acquitted. But I didn't know your story and I knew that mine must save you. And it did. But it was a blunder; and I shiver at what may be its consequences to-day.

STELLA (*rise*). Mine was the blunder. (HAZLEWOOD *goes up outside* L. *meets* DICK.) I should have said what I had to say a month ago—that's all that was needed. But I didn't say it. So——

THRESK. No!

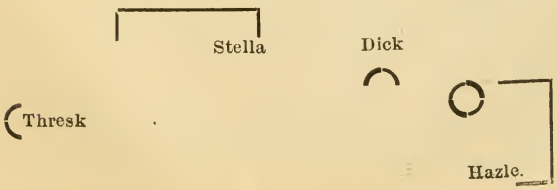
STELLA. You can't prevent me.

THRESK. I can try.

STELLA (DICK *enters* L.U., *joins* HAZLEWOOD; *they enter together* L.C. HAZLEWOOD *comes down* L. DICK L.C.). What can you do? (*A movement of despair from* THRESK.) Nothing! Hush! (DICK *enters.*) You found it, Dick?

DICK. Yes.

STELLA. Thank you. (*Taking bag.*)



HAZLEWOOD. Ah! Good morning! Mrs. Ballantyne has something to say to us, I believe?

STELLA. Yes.

DICK. Wait a moment, will you? (*To* STELLA.) Stella, you came back here last night after I had taken you home?

HAZLEWOOD. That really has nothing to do——

DICK. I am sorry, father. But I want to know exactly how we stand.

STELLA. Yes. I came back. I ran across the meadow. I waited outside until there was no longer any sound of voices. Then I rapped upon the window.

DICK. And Thresk let you in?

STELLA. Yes.

DICK. You came to see him?

STELLA. You told me he would be sitting late over his brief.

DICK. Yes, I did. And I take it that while you were here, talking to Thresk, my father interrupted you?

HAZLEWOOD. I heard voices, and so naturally I came down.

DICK. Quite so, father. I am not blaming anybody. And because my father interrupted you last night, you have something to tell me this morning.

STELLA. No. I had made up my mind before Mr. Hazlewood came down.

HAZLEWOOD. Ah! But we have no proof of that.

DICK. I didn't ask for one.

STELLA. But it's fair to say this. I should have chosen a moment when you and I were alone, but for Mr. Hazlewood's interruption.

DICK. Yes. Very well. Now, what is it? (*Sits* R. *of tea table.*)

STELLA. Two years ago I was tried for my life. I was acquitted. It was supposed that a thief was responsible. (HAZLEWOOD *sits on settee* L.) It was not a thief. It was I.

HAZLEWOOD. You hear, Richard?

DICK. Hush! Will you tell me everything, please? (STELLA *appeals to* THRESK.) No, you, Stella, please.

STELLA. I was going to kill myself. I—— (*She turns to* THRESK.) Oh, tell him!

(*Ring bells.*)

DICK. No, you, please.

STELLA. He came back too soon. He ran at me. I was crazy with fear. I had the rifle in my hands. It all came upon me in a second that this was the way. I used it—(*Drops bag.*) now what do you say?

(*She is leaning forward intently.* THRESK *is close to her.* DICK *doesn't answer.* STELLA *sinks in her seat.*)

DICK. Is that everything? (*Rise.*)

STELLA. No, not quite! I was acting instinctively in self-defence. But there was just one little moment when I knew what I was going to do. You could hardly measure it by time; yet to me it was distinct enough, a fragment of a second when he recoiled, knowing what I was going to do, just as I suddenly knew it, a moment when he seemed to me to bleat—to bleat for mercy.

(DICK *goes up to* STELLA, *leans over her.* THRESK *goes up* R. *a little. Sits* R. *of table* C.)

DICK. Why didn't you tell me this at the beginning, Stella?

STELLA (*catches hold of* DICK'S *hand*). Oh, Dick, I tried to tell you. I made up my mind so often! But I had never the courage! I hid it all from you—yes. But oh, you meant so much to me. I longed for you to want me as I wanted you. (*Rises; comes down a little. Struggles to be calm.*) But I don't ask for your pity. You mustn't be merciful. I don't want mercy, Dick. That's of no use to me. . . .

I want to know what you think—just what you really and truthfully think. That's all. I can stand alone—if I must. Oh, yes, I can stand alone—quite easily—you mustn't think that I should suffer so very much—I shouldn't—I shouldn't.

(*She is sobbing. Comes to settee* C. *Sinks on it, buries her face in her arms on* L. *arm.*)

HAZLEWOOD. You hear that, Richard?

DICK. Yes, I hear it. But you see, father, this is my wife.

(*He lifts her up.*)

HAZLEWOOD. Your—no! no! (*Rises.*)

DICK. This is my wife. Perhaps you remember that I have rooms in London; that I went to London last Tuesday. So did Stella. (*His arm round* STELLA.)

HAZLEWOOD. But you heard what she said. She has tricked you.

DICK. No! father. Stella has been trying to tell me something—often during the last weeks. I knew what it was—before you turned against her, before I asked her to marry me. She didn't trick me. I knew very well.

HAZLEWOOD. But——

DICK. This is my wife.

(*Count* 4. *Enter* HUBBARD L. DICK *takes* STELLA L. *of seat.*)

HUBBARD (*to* THRESK). The carriage is at the door, sir. You have not too much time if you wish to catch your train.

THRESK. Then I'll go. (HUBBARD *goes out* L. THRESK *comes to* HAZLEWOOD. DICK *and* STELLA *get* C.) Good-bye, Mr. Hazlewood. I am very glad that you asked me here to give my advice on your collection. I was inclined yesterday to take a different view of your invitation. But I did perhaps what

I may suggest that you should do. I accepted the situation.

STELLA. Oh, thank you—thank you.

(*Comes over, takes* STELLA'S *and* DICK'S *hand.* HAZLEWOOD *up above to a table.* STELLA *crosses* DICK, *who gets* R. *of her.*)

STELLA. But it's not good-bye to me—to us. You are going to see us again. You are big enough for that?

THRESK. No, I'm not going out into the night. I'm going back to London. You know my address, (*Goes* L.) and if you don't Mr. Hazlewood does. (L. *of back of settee.*) No. 9, King's Bench Walk—that's it, isn't it? Good-bye.

CURTAIN ON LAST WORD.

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